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NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

PREEMPTION IN U.S. STRATEGIC CULTURE

by

Daniela F. Marca

June 2004

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington DC 20503.				
1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)		2. REPORT DATE June 2004	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Master's Thesis	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE: Preemption in U.S. Strategic Culture			5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHOR(S) Daniela F. Marca				
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A			10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.				
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited			12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE	
13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words) <p>This thesis strives to shed light on the genuine significance of the current transformation of the U.S. foreign and strategic policy.</p> <p>In essence, this thesis concludes that the Bush doctrine of preemption is inconsistent with the American strategic culture and view of the use of force displayed throughout the American foreign policy ever since the Truman administration. Although not a revolution <i>per se</i> in the American goals, the new foreign policy represents a radical change in the manner to pursue them. While promoting a unilateralist foreign policy and revived "war-fighting" strategies, the current administration takes old rationales a step further. By elevating preemption from the tactical to strategic level, the doctrine transforms a last resort policy option into a primary offensive strategy with destabilizing consequences for international relations.</p> <p>The analysis concludes that the increased authority of the hard-line approach in the American foreign and security policy is circumstantial, and the likelihood of its endurance is unrealistic. The international system comprises built-in constraints that raise the cost of isolationist and unilateralist impulses to unbearable levels in the long term. These constraints are the end result of the American national values' projection at international level.</p>				
14. SUBJECT TERMS U.S. Foreign and Strategic Policy, War-Fighting Strategies, Preemption			15. NUMBER OF PAGES 95	
			16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UL	

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PREEMPTION IN U.S. STRATEGIC CULTURE

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES
(DEFENSE DECISION-MAKING AND PLANNING)**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
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ABSTRACT

This thesis strives to shed light on the genuine significance of the current transformation of the U.S. foreign and strategic policy.

In essence, this thesis concludes that the Bush doctrine of preemption is inconsistent with the American strategic culture and view of the use of force displayed throughout the American foreign policy ever since the Truman administration. Although not a revolution *per se* in the American goals, the new foreign policy represents a radical change in the manner to pursue them. While promoting a unilateralist foreign policy and revived “war-fighting” strategies, the current administration takes old rationales a step further. By elevating preemption from the tactical to strategic level, the doctrine transforms a last resort policy option into a primary offensive strategy with destabilizing consequences for international relations.

The analysis concludes that the increased authority of the hard-line approach in the American foreign and security policy is circumstantial, and the likelihood of its endurance is unrealistic. The international system comprises built-in constraints that raise the cost of isolationist and unilateralist impulses to unbearable levels in the long term. These constraints are the end result of the American national values’ projection at international level.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For the duration of my studies at the Naval Postgraduate School, I have accumulated numerous debts. To start with, I am thankful to my friends back home and colleagues at the Romanian MFA. Their appreciation and confidence compelled me to constantly reach for higher standards.

For the completion of this thesis, I am profoundly grateful to Dr. Anne Clunan. Her remarkable patience and astute advice greatly enriched my work, while her moral support was instrumental to my perseverance to finalize this thesis.

I am in debt to Professor Don Abenheim for his tremendous contribution to my education at the Naval Postgraduate School. His enthusiasm and dedication in teaching us to look in the past for far-sighted images of the future has been truly inspiring.

Although brief, the cooperation with Professor David Yost has been highly beneficial for my work on this thesis, and I thank him for the time and effort invested.

My professional experience at the Naval Postgraduate School has been balanced with special moments which I will always cherish. For that, I am thankful to my new friends: Magda, Maria, Esther, Jessica, Tomasz, Luis, Boris, Dan, and Homer. In particular, I take this opportunity to convey special gratitude to my “adoptive brothers” - David and Vitalyi, for their friendship and thoughtfulness genuinely touched me. They all made the separation from my family bearable while studying at the Naval Postgraduate School.

Above all, I am deeply grateful to my family – my parents, for the love they surrounded me with throughout time, and my husband, Sorin, for being by my side literally a lifetime through “better and worse.” His love, faith in me, and constant support gave me the strength and inspiration to follow my dreams. I owe to him the most important achievements in my life.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The ardent debate preceding the 2003 U.S.-led intervention in Iraq generated a crisis situation, with predictions of a gloomy future for the trans-Atlantic partnership. In light of the diverging positions on the policy toward Iraq, some scholars emphasized that, despite common agreement on the general values, a gap is widening between Europeans and Americans in terms of the ranking threat perceptions and preferred method of coping with them. They perceived the elevation of the preemption doctrine to the status of primary policy option as a departure from the traditional U.S. strategic culture, with destabilizing effect for the international security environment.¹

Indeed, although the concepts of a preventive and preemptive attack were rooted in traditional military patterns of thinking, twentieth century strategic considerations, as well as earlier developments in the field of international law, imposed restrictions on the use of force and standards of acceptable behavior in inter-state relations. Thus, in view of remarkable efforts made by the American administrations throughout the last half of century to uphold a stable international environment through institutions, the spread of democracy and rule of law, the new stance in the American foreign policy was considered a radical transformation. Furthermore, the Bush doctrine seems even more puzzling in light of the American view of the use of force illustrated by President Truman - "We do not believe in aggressive or preventive war. Such war is the weapon of dictators, not of free democratic societies."²

Nonetheless, today, American officials stress that the current setting of the security environment is characterized by a "crossroad of radicalism and technology," requiring decisive action, as President Bush June pointed out during his 2002 West Point address.³ The complexity of the new security challenges was revealed by other officials

¹ 2002 US National Security Strategy, (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html>, consulted on 11 January 2004)

² Amos A. Jordan, William J. Taylor, Jr., and Michael J. Mazarr, *American National Security*, Fifth edition, Baltimore and London, The John Hopkins University Press, 1999, p. 57.

³ President George W. Bush, Remarks at 2002 Graduation Exercise of the United States Military Academy West Point, New York, (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/06/20020601-3.html>, consulted on 3 June 2004)

as well, stating that as “rogue states, religious extremism and international terrorism ... become inextricably linked ... [feeding] off the other, the sum of evil is even greater than that of the individual parts.”⁴ Consequently, the Bush administration argued that the American national security strategy has to be adapted to the enemy’s “determination to obtain destructive powers ... and the greater likelihood that they will use weapons of mass destruction.”⁵

In light of the aforementioned debate about trans-Atlantic rift and criticism of U.S. foreign policy, this thesis strives to shed light on the genuine significance of the current development of the U.S. foreign and strategic policy. It will do so by observing the manner in which preemption policy has been mirrored in the U.S. strategic culture. For this purpose, the thesis examines the U.S. national security policy, with special attention to preemption and preventive war. In addition, the analysis employs the framework offered by international norms of the use of force. The objective is to use the international norms designed and endorsed by the United States along the last half of century as a point of reference for the national values traditionally promoted by the United States.

The findings build the foundation for a better understanding of the rationale behind the recent evolutions of the U.S. foreign policy and the magnitude of transformations. The overarching goal of this thesis is to determine if the new doctrine is a predominant longstanding American preference or a radical transformation. Moreover, the focus on U.S. strategic culture provides useful device to evaluate the likelihood of Bush doctrine’s longevity.

In sum, the analysis reveals the American view of the use of force. In light of the United States’ position as the most powerful state in the international system, the results bear great significance suggesting manners in which the American power might be employed in the future.

⁴ Margaret Thatcher, *Statecraft - Strategies for a Changing World*, United Kingdom, HarperCollins Publishers, 2002, p. 207.

⁵ 2002 US National Security Strategy, (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html>), consulted on 11 January 2004)

In essence, this thesis concludes that the Bush doctrine of preemption is inconsistent with the American strategic culture and view of the use of force displayed throughout the American foreign policy ever since the Truman administration. Although not a revolution *per se* in the American goals, the new foreign policy represents a radical change in the manner to pursue them.⁶

For the most part, throughout the Cold War the U.S. declaratory policy followed a cyclical line between opposing doctrines, alternating between bolder and more lenient postures. The shift was determined by strategic considerations, technological progress and personal beliefs of the political and military leadership. However, despite the fluctuation in the American national security policy, an overall multilateral orientation has been an element of continuity in the American strategic culture throughout the modern history.

As opposed to previous policies, the Bush doctrine of preemption represents a sharp break with the American strategic culture. While promoting a unilateralist foreign policy and revived “war-fighting” strategies, the current administration takes old rationales a step further.⁷ In other words, by elevating preemption from tactical to strategic level, the doctrine transforms for the first time in the history of the United States a mostly last resort policy option into a primary offensive strategy.

Internationally the Bush doctrine has generated great concern. One reason is that it is widely seen to be at odds with provisions for anticipatory self-defense. Furthermore, as defined in the 2002 U.S. National Security Strategy, the Bush doctrine of preemption resembles the argument of preventive action. In addition, the United States’ attempt to implement the new doctrine in the case of Iraq was considered by some UN members in violation of key norms of international law – i.e., sovereignty, state responsibility and non-intervention.⁸

⁶ Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy*, Washington, D.C., The Brookings Institution, 2003, p. 40.

⁷ Miriam Sapiro, “Iraq: The Shifting Sands of Preemptive Self-Defense,” *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 97, No. 3, July 2003, p. 599.

⁸ Michael J. Glennon, “Why the Security Council Failed,” *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2003, p. 2.

Ultimately, this thesis concludes that the increased authority of the hard-line approach in the American foreign and security policy is circumstantial, and the likelihood of a lasting influence of the Bush doctrine of preemption is unrealistic. It is particularly the United States' success over the last half of century in transferring national values at the international level aiming to shape a new pattern of interaction in the international relations that places constraints on the American behavior. In today's globalized era, where the threats acquired a trans-national character, unilateral conduct faces constraints posed by the achievement of the binding relations envisaged more than a half of century ago by the Western democracies under substantial American influence. The impossibility to tackle the challenges to the security environment in isolation, transforms cooperation in a mandatory component for success.

To arrive at these findings, the thesis employs the framework of analysis offered by the literature on strategic culture.⁹ It examines the enduring trends as well as discontinuities in threat perceptions, strategic preferences, and choices made by the American elites in order to cope with the challenges presented by the international security.

The utility of the strategic culture approach is offered by its focus on analyzing the particularities of each nation in "adapting to the environment and solving problems with respect to the threat or use of force."¹⁰ This complements the study of international relations by emphasizing the notion of national identity and the importance of culture in the process of identity formation. By recognizing national particularities, the added value of the strategic culture approach rests on the creation of a comprehensive view of perceptions and distinct model of reasoning. In statecraft, the strategic culture insight

⁹ Jack Snyder was among the first to coin the term of "strategic culture," in 1977, in a study of the Soviet military strategy. His analysis of the Soviet nuclear strategy through the framework offered by strategic culture was critical insight in the context of deterrence doctrine, which guided the American strategy at the time. The influence that Snyder's breakthrough had on strategic studies scholarship has been illustrated by subsequent publications: *Strategy and Ethnocentrism*, by Ken Booth; *Nuclear Strategy and National Style*, by Colin Gray.

¹⁰ Ken Booth, "The Concept of Strategic Culture Affirmed," in Carl G. Jacobsen, ed., *Strategic Power: USA/USSR*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1990, p. 121.

provides a critical foundation for a comprehensive policy and communication strategy. It does so by complementing the narrow focus of the neorealist structural approach on a rational state-actor model centered on abstraction and rationality.¹¹

Hence, this thesis considers the influence of historically-rooted experiences in shaping U.S. perceptions with regard to security environment and provides details about the causal relations that fed the process of ranking preferred methods to efficiently cope with a perceived threat. While, the strategic culture account is one of the multiple causation explanations that lead to a decision, its utility rests on the insight provided with regards to national particularities embedded in enduring perceptions, patterns of reasoning and preferred behavior to cope with the perceived threat.¹²

A. STRATEGIC CULTURE FRAMEWORK

The study of strategic culture gained increased relevance in early 1990s. The incentive was generated by the inability of the mainstream schools of thought in the international relations field to predict or explain the end of the Cold War.¹³ The main goal was to achieve a more comprehensive analysis by examining dimensions formerly clouded by the rationalist model propagated during the Cold War.¹⁴

The new strategic circumstances as well as the transformed nature of the international relations prompted scholars' determination to extend the knowledge about inter-state relations, by including a "sociological perspective on the politics of national security."¹⁵ Hence, building on Richard Ullman's earlier call for "broadening ... the

¹¹ Ken Booth, "The Concept of Strategic Culture Affirmed," p. 122.

¹² Colin S. Gray, *Nuclear Strategy and National Style*, Lanham, Md., Hamilton Press/Abt. Books, 1986, p. 38.

¹³ Peter Katzenstein, "Preface," *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, New York, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein, Columbia University Press, 1996, p. XI.

¹⁴ Among the new scholars of strategic culture, Stephen Peter Rosen examines the influence of the nature of the society in determining the military power generated by different nations, in order to identify the rationale for distinct military capabilities held by different cultures. For a detailed discussion see Stephen Peter Rosen, "Military Effectiveness: Why Society Matters," *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 4, Spring 1995.

Similarly, Elizabeth Kier analyzes the driving factor in the process of decision making with regards to the type of military doctrine a state adopts, from an organizational cultural perspective. For a detailed discussion see Elizabeth Kier, "Culture and Military Doctrine: France between the Wars," *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 4, Spring 1995.

¹⁵ Peter Katzenstein, "Introduction: Alternative Perspectives on National Security," *The Culture of National Security*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein, p. 2.

concept of security” beyond the material capabilities and military force, far-reaching perspectives were advocated, to predict national preferences for future security strategies.¹⁶

As a result, the concepts of power and wealth, as objects of analysis of the salient schools of thought, were supplemented by the socio-cultural factors of the institutional context. The goal was to acknowledge the influence of states’ “constructed identity” to the national security, particularly with regards to the process of decision-making.¹⁷ Hence, the analysis compelled sociological use of concepts like collective norms, identity and culture in an effort to enlighten their constitutive and regulative effect on preferences of national security policy.¹⁸

By identifying the sources of national interest and strategic preferences formation, the insight offered by the strategic culture was viewed particularly helpful for the post-Cold War efforts to design the new world order, as noted by John Ikenberry:

the character and stability of postwar order hinge on the capacities of states to develop institutional mechanisms to restrain power and establish binding commitments – capacities that stem from the political character of states and prevailing strategic thinking about the sources of international order.¹⁹

Overall, Alastair Iain Johnston has been the scholar of strategic culture that made the most impressive intellectual effort to further the concept. Endorsing previous definitions of strategic culture, he emphasizes that national particularities with regards to predominant strategic preferences are rooted in the formative experiences of the state, and influenced by “the philosophical, political, cultural, and cognitive characteristics of the state and its elites.”²⁰

¹⁶ Peter Katzenstein, “Introduction: Alternative Perspectives on National Security,” *The Culture of National Security*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein, p. 8.

¹⁷ Peter Katzenstein, “Introduction: Alternative Perspectives on National Security,” *The Culture of National Security*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein, pp. 4-28.

¹⁸ Peter Katzenstein, “Introduction: Alternative Perspectives on National Security,” *The Culture of National Security*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein, p. 5.

¹⁹ John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars*, Princeton and Oxford, Princeton University Press, 2001, p. 10.

²⁰ Alastair Iain Johnston, “Thinking about Strategic Culture,” *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 4, Spring 1995, p. 34.

He argues that each state's rationality is defined and consistent with its strategic culture, as formative experiences define the manner of ranking preferences and methods to cope with particular situations. In short, the strategic culture generates a set of lenses through which the reality is viewed:

Strategic culture is an integrated <system of symbols (e.g., argumentation structures, languages, analogies, metaphors) which acts to establish pervasive and long-lasting strategic preferences by formulating concepts of the role and efficacy of military force in interstate political affairs, and by clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the strategic preferences seem uniquely realistic and efficacious.²¹

Johnston's analysis of strategic culture centers on fundamental assumptions of a nation about the strategic environment:

the role of war in human affairs (whether it is inevitable or an aberration), about the nature of the adversary and the threat it poses (zero-sum or variable sum), and about the efficacy of the use of force (about the ability to control outcomes and to eliminate threats, and the conditions under which applied force is useful).²²

In his opinion, the particular worldview defined by the strategic culture results in specific strategic options viewed as retaining a higher degree of efficiency in dealing with the threat environment, in particular a "ranked set of grand strategic preferences that are consistent across the objects of analysis and persistent across time."²³

For the purpose of this thesis, the conception of strategic culture developed by Alastair Johnston is used in a customized form. The analysis accounts for the American elites' debates about the U.S.'s role in the international system and preferred methods to cope with the perceived threat.²⁴ To achieve that, the thesis examines the U.S. National Security Strategy and the evolution of the military doctrine throughout the Cold War and post-Cold War era.

²¹ Alastair Iain Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture," p. 46.

²² Alastair Iain Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture," p. 46.

²³ Alastair Iain Johnston, "Cultural Realism and Strategy in Maoist China," *The Culture of National Security*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein, p. 223.

²⁴ Amos A. Jordan et al., *American National Security*, p. 46.

The focus will be on the threat perceptions, the view of the role of war, and efficacy of the use of force embedded in the American strategic culture. Special consideration is given to the manner in which the concepts of preventive and preemptive action are perceived.

Hence, at the outset, chapter II sets the scene by portraying the initial American strategic culture. Competing worldviews and values with regards to the use of force are discussed. The purpose is to lay the foundation for a thorough understanding of the American strategic culture, and offer the needed background to grasp the process of rationalization behind the foreign and national security policy formulation.

As the systemic management mechanism envisaged at the end of the World War II were greatly influenced by the American values and norms, the analysis continues by offering an overview of international law provisions regarding the legitimate use of force in self-defense. The goal is to set the scene for a better perspective of the significance of current transformations, by using both national and international norms and values as point of reference throughout the analysis.

Subsequently, Chapters III and IV examine the evolution of the U.S. military strategy in the Cold War and post-Cold War era and the worldview that shaped it. In other words, these chapters present a historical synopsis of United States policy preferences in national security. The continuation of trends and major alterations in the American national security policy are accounted for, as well as the driving factors that determined them. In doing so, the analysis reveals the process of formation of enduring patterns with regards to perceptions of threat and predominant strategic preferences of behavior adopted to cope with it. An historical overview of preemption in the U.S. strategic policy concludes each of the two chapters.

Next, the thesis concludes by analyzing the Bush doctrine of preemption through the lenses offered by previous chapters – i.e., the American strategic culture and practice, as well as international law provisions with the goal to identify the significance of the Bush doctrine of preemption for the American strategic culture and prospects of its durability.

II. NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL NORMS OF USE OF FORCE

A. TRADITIONAL AMERICAN VIEW OF NATIONAL SECURITY AND USE OF FORCE

According to scholars of strategic culture, the initial American perception of security was shaped by its geographic position. The relative geographical isolation and the absence of an immediate external threat generated among Americans a perception of physical security, directing the focus toward domestic issues, consolidation of the hemispheric interest and continental expansion.²⁵ Several other factors contributed to reinforce this interpretation. Primarily, it was the heritage of Enlightenment philosophy, particularly of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's writings and John Locke's natural rights doctrine, which viewed the state of nature as a condition of "peace, mutual assistance, and preservation."²⁶ This led to a utopian view of the world, reinforced by the Judeo-Christian gospel, which added a feature of morality as essential value of the American identity as well as a sense of mission as national responsibility.²⁷ Equally important, the absence of great powers war that followed the Congress of Vienna (1815) defined the initial American perception of normalcy as lacking outside intrusion and primacy of domestic affairs.²⁸ Thus, in light of this perception of normalcy, the issues related to security and foreign affairs were neglected by the American strategic culture in favor of domestic affairs.²⁹

By and large, even at the beginning of the twentieth century, the mainstream American view of foreign policy was defined by isolationist tendencies, best illustrated by President George Washington's advice to the American people in the farewell address (1796):

²⁵ Amos A. Jordan et al., *American National Security*, p. 52.

²⁶ Amos A. Jordan et al., *American National Security*, p. 54.

²⁷ Sam C. Sarkesian, John Allen Williams, Stephen J. Cimbala, *U.S. National Security Policymakers, Processes, and Politics*, Third Edition, Boulder and London, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002, p. 8.

²⁸ The Congress of Vienna introduced one of the longest periods of European peace, precluding wars among the Great European Powers for forty years, and no general war for another sixty years.

²⁹ Amos A. Jordan et al., *American National Security*, pp. 52- 60.

The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible... Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves by artificial ties in the ordinary vicissitudes of ... [Europe's] politics, or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities.³⁰

Overall, America was better off without the burden of the European history, contaminated with the virus of rivalry and violence, leading to self-destruction. It was the European immoral imperialistic conquest, which prompted Americans to consider European powers corrupted and decadent. This was in part the result of the American view of war.

Considered a pathological aberration, war was rejected by Americans as tool of statecraft, in disagreement with von Clausewitz's dictum that war is an extension of politics. Moreover, if conflict was imminent, the war had to pursue a just cause. The goal had to be to restore the state of normalcy, represented by peaceful relations – i.e., to end all wars.³¹ Hence, the American strategic culture portrayed war as a last resort tool, employed for moral principles.

The ethical approach of the American strategic culture contributed in shaping not only the reasoning for going to war, but also the manner in which war was to be fought. That is to say that war was seen legitimate when “fought either in self-defense or in collective defense against an armed attack.”³² Furthermore, the strong belief in “just war” and the important role played by religion added a crusading spirit to the American way of war. This particularity acted at times as a powerful catalyst for violence, pushing for prompt response - i.e., American involvement in a war had to be swift and efficient.

Overall, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the American strategic culture was defined by clear distinction between the instruments of peace and those of war. This shaped rigid positions, limiting the range of preferences in the American process of assessment to extreme options: e.g., good versus evil. The evil had to be eradicated in a

³⁰ President George Washington farewell address, The Avalon Project at Yale Law School (www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/washing.htm, consulted on 28 August 2003).

³¹ Amos A. Jordan et al., *American National Security*, p. 59.

³² Robert W. Tucker, *The Just War: A Study in Contemporary American Doctrine*, Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 1979, p. 11.

prompt manner, reflecting clear and final decisions, as the American expectations in a war were marked by impatience and tendency to claim total victory, or unconditioned surrender.³³

B. COMPETING VISIONS OF SECURITY

Nonetheless, notwithstanding the traditional isolationist stance of the American strategic culture, the lessons learned from the two World Wars taught the American political leadership that leaving fundamental decisions to others bore a high cost. This implied that the United States could not insulate itself from the rest of the world. The goal was to export/spread the American national values and sense of normalcy in order to preclude another World War.

Thus, according to their post-World War II leadership role in the international system the American elites assumed the responsibility to actively participate in designing “rules and principles of international relations” for the new world order.³⁴ It follows that the foreign policy questions facing the American leadership were essentially addressing the challenge of defining the United States’ national interest and the means to pursue it.

Despite of isolationists’ disgrace, the debate about the American foreign policy continued, disputing the arguments for U.S. international role advanced by two different schools of thought: multilateralists and unilateralists. They were divided by disagreements about the manner in which the American interest should be pursued. The former advocated international organizations, military alliances and advance of the rule of law as the key instruments of foreign policy. Conversely, the unilateralists favored an assertive foreign policy, lacking entanglement, especially in situations where the American vital interest was not involved. They accepted the international organizations and alliances only conditioned by the American dominance over them.³⁵

As the interwar experience illustrated that, favored by political leaders, unfettered unilateralism contributes to isolationist outcome, the Truman administration opted for a foreign policy that followed Woodrow Wilson’s goals in a fashion informed by the realities of power politics. The new American view of foreign policy relied on

³³ Amos A. Jordan et al., *American National Security*, p. 59.

³⁴ John Ikenberry, *After Victory*, p. 3.

³⁵ Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *America Unbound*, pp. 9-11.

multilateral approach, consisting of a just blend of power and cooperation. Hence, President Truman carried on President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's concept for pursuit of universal security in concert of power, which reconciled Presidents Woodrow Wilson's liberal internationalist view with President Theodore Roosevelt's vision of concert of power. Despite grievance from hard-line conservatives favoring unilateralist view, the Truman administration succeeded to consolidate consensus pertaining to American foreign policy.³⁶ President Truman's visionary leadership synthesized and reconciled diverging trends in the public debate for an active participation of the United States in a system founded on principles of multilateral relations.³⁷

C. SHIFTING THE TRADITIONAL AMERICAN STRATEGIC CULTURE

In retrospect, the Truman doctrine could be singled out as a turning point, which profoundly transformed the American foreign and security policy with significant implications for the twentieth century international relations. The multilateral orientation assumed by the Truman administration implied that the United States national security policy needed to be upgraded according to the new responsibility as well.

This task was challenged by the traditional style of American national security policy, typically developed as response to pressing operational need to solve one immediate problem.³⁸ Hence, initial efforts to integrate foreign and domestic policies on political and military fields were hindered by the American reliance on a national security policy of "mobilizing to meet threats, rather than constantly maintaining adequate forces."³⁹

Nonetheless, the need for a coherent, far-sighted national security posture was addressed in President Truman's foreign policy. Intended to revolutionize the American strategic culture, the 1947 National Security Act, issued during his administration, envisaged institutional structure and a comprehensive policy, based on elaborated national security goals, concepts, policies and programs. The document proposed realignment and reorganization of governmental structures - i.e., United States' armed

³⁶ John G. Ruggie, *Winning the Peace*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1996, pp. 23-39.

³⁷ For a detailed description, see John G. Ruggie, *Winning the Peace*.

³⁸ For a detailed discussion see Richard Smoke, *National Security and the Nuclear Dilemma, An Introduction to the American Experience*, Second Edition, New York, Random House, 1987.

³⁹ Amos A Jordan et al., *American National Security*, p. 66.

forces and foreign policy. Its policy recommendation - i.e., containment - was adopted by winter 1947. Hereafter, containment was the fundamental guideline of the U.S. foreign policy, with the overarching objective to stop Soviet expansionism.⁴⁰ The alternatives to containment considered at the time were a preventive war strategy with the goal of regime change in Soviet Union, and a defensive strategy, which implied massive deployment of American forces to Europe.⁴¹ Both alternatives were ruled out as the first one was considered immoral, and the second too costly.

Therefore, under the guidance of containment, the U.S. foreign policy aimed to build a “long-term, patient but firm and vigilant” posture.⁴² It was to be implemented through a variety of political, diplomatic and economic policies and supported by deterrence as military strategy.⁴³ Consistent with each other, the two concepts – containment and deterrence – were cost-effective and aimed to avoid military conflict. Both qualities appealed to the American public, due to lingering isolationist tendencies. Furthermore, the deterrence strategy was favored by the realities of the strategic environment - i.e., Soviet superiority in conventional force and American atomic monopoly.

As portrayed by its author, George Kennan, the success of the containment strategies depended on confronting the Soviet Union with a united front fighting for a common cause. This assumption was the foundation of the multilateral orientation of the Truman doctrine, bearing significance for the subsequent development of the newly designed international relations.

Hence, by declaring the American security interests “inextricably linked with those of Western Europe,” Truman decided to broaden the definition of security, and advance American interest and values through multilateral institutions.⁴⁴ This approach

⁴⁰ Richard Smoke, *National Security and the Nuclear Dilemma*, p. 50.

⁴¹ Richard Smoke, *National Security and the Nuclear Dilemma*, p. 53.

⁴² Amos A Jordan et al., *American National Security*, p. 67.

⁴³ The strategy of containment was to be implemented through policies like the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan.

⁴⁴ Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *America Unbound*, p. 9.

was seen as advancing the long-term interest of the United States, by reducing chances of resentment, and thus improving conditions for cooperation within the trans-Atlantic alliance through legitimate leadership.

In other words, at the end of World War II the American political leadership decided to build what G. John Ikenberry has called a “constitutional world order” to reflect the liberal democratic ideology driving American policy. To cultivate a sense of legitimacy, the new order was founded on voluntary participation in a system founded on liberal values such as democratic governance, human rights, the rule of law, and free markets. Despite national differences, the overarching belief in the importance of open and multilateral relations was the ingredient linking the Western democracies together under American leadership. As a result, a multi-layered network of regional and global, multilateral and bilateral institutions was developed. The focus on democratic and open domestic political orders allowed for increased interdependence, leading to mutual and reciprocal binding. The newly designed systemic management mechanism reflected the American national values and worldview.⁴⁵

Essentially, the dramatic experience of the two World Wars stirred a critical quest for peace in European inter-state relations as a necessary backdrop for economic rebuilding and political cooperation in Western Europe. This resulted in the Western European industrial states, the United States and Japan choosing to compromise and participate in a system that would promote stability, as critical component for economic prosperity. Hence, a mutual and reciprocal binding relationship came about. Although the participating nations were motivated by different interests, there was an agreement about the mechanisms and mutual benefit. On one hand, the United States was aiming to bind the Europeans together and include West Germany in a unified Europe that would lack conflict and thus avoid any need for American military intervention. Conversely, the Europeans conditioned their cooperation on binding U.S. commitments to their security and relied on predictable U.S. leadership behavior, characterized by restraint and reassurance.

⁴⁵ G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory*, pp. 163-215.

Underlying the entire construction was the strong belief that democracy and open markets would result in economic and political transnational ties that would preclude future conflicts. Furthermore, the institutional strategies were meant to overcome the insecurities that might arise from the asymmetrical balance between the European powers and the United States through clearly defined expectations of behavior. The highly institutionalized system was developed around regimes, mechanisms and institutional norms regulating interactions among member states. By prescribing tolerable state behavioral roles, the set of norms succeeded in generating a stable environment, “constraining activity and shaping expectations.”⁴⁶

D. PREVENTION AND PREEMPTION IN THE COLD WAR MULTILATERAL ORDER

Besides the political, military, and economic policies, throughout the process of designing the new institutions, a particular emphasis was placed on efforts to constrain the use of force, in order to prevent another escalation of violence. Here as well the United States played a critical role.

Hence, Woodrow Wilsons’ efforts to design the League of Nations constituted the foundation of the new international body – i.e., UN - designed “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.”⁴⁷ On this background, the UN Charter advanced two overarching principles with regard to the use of force: non-intervention and sovereignty. Both are embedded in Article 2(4) of the UN Charter, which prohibited the use of force: “All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.”⁴⁸

The Charter did envisage exceptions to the prohibition on the use of force. Nonetheless, it limited the range of situations that allow for the legitimate use of force by defining particular circumstances qualified as tolerable – i.e., the right to self-defense and UN Security Council-authorized intervention in case of aggression. Hence, Article 51

⁴⁶ Thomas Risse-Kappen, *Cooperation among Democracies, The European Influence on US Foreign Policy*, ed. by Peter J Katzenstein, New York, Columbia University Press, 1996, p. 25.

⁴⁷ UN Charter, preamble (<http://www.un.org/aboutun/charter>, consulted February 2003).

⁴⁸ William R. Slomanson, *Fundamental Perspectives on International Law*, Fourth Edition, San Diego, CA, Wadsworth Thomson, 2003, p. 485.

declares that “Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations,” whereas Article 39 states that:

The Security Council shall determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression and shall make recommendations, or decide what measures shall be taken in accordance with Articles 41 and 42, to maintain or restore international peace and security.

In other words, to assure the legitimacy of such endeavors, Article 39 of the Charter vested the Security Council with the legal monopoly on the use of force, requiring UNSC authorization for the use of force in cases other than self-defense.

However, despite efforts to develop norms and standards of acceptable behavior, the legitimization of the use of force has remained a source of controversy, especially since the UNSC was paralyzed during the Cold War by the U.S. and Soviet vetoes. Although the twentieth century normative system may have helped to constrain violence in some cases, the gap between the abstract nature of international law and the pragmatic approach of statecraft offered at times different perspectives on the circumstances that qualify as self-defense. Specifically, while the legal right to self-defense following an attack is a clear and universally accepted concept, the anticipatory use of force for self-defense still raises disagreements. The controversy stems in part from the resemblance of preemptive action to preventive attacks.

The concepts of preventive and preemptive attack are rooted in the security dilemma and may be encouraged in some cases by a “cheap victory strategy.”⁴⁹ As Richard Betts has noted, both concepts combine the two overarching modes of military operations - offensive and defensive - by using defensive motivations to justify strategic offensives.⁵⁰ Nonetheless, the two strategies pursue different goals and differ as to their

⁴⁹ Defined by Patrick M. Morgan, the cheap victory strategy aimed at ensuring “that the great costs, destruction, and loss of life would fall mainly on the other side... usually required striking by surprise or before the other party was fully prepared,” in Patrick M. Morgan, *Deterrence Now*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 6.

⁵⁰ Richard K. Betts, “Striking First: A History of Thankfully Lost Opportunities,” *Ethics & International Affairs*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 2003, p. 1.

status in international law. Essentially, preventive war is unlawful, while the preemptive use of force may be considered legitimate self-defense as long as the criteria established by international law have been met.

Preventive attack is founded on a traditional realist paradigm. It aims at precluding a shift in the balance of power seen from the perspective of military capability. In preventive war the aggressor sometimes has superior power and aims at preserving the status quo. The action is generated by strong belief in military power as a decisive factor in international relations. As war is considered inevitable, the underlying logic of a preventive war is to strike before any chance of victory is entirely lost. Preventive war was considered a legitimate strategy of statecraft in early centuries of European history, but it was condemned by Grotius in the seventeenth century.

Conversely, preemptive attack is morally accepted, when considered an act of self-defense in the face of a clear and immediate threat. The preemptive logic is favored by the perceived lack of success of other strategies – e.g., containment or deterrence – and it assumes more or less equal military power positions. As opposed to prevention, the claim of preemptive self-defense has to be founded on solid and compelling proof of both the opponent's aggressive intention and his capabilities to do immediate harm. Anxiety about the risk of misperception, as preparatory reactions to rising tensions might easily stir a spiral effect with disastrous consequences, prompted efforts by statesmen to establish criteria that would offer predictability about the circumstances that may render the anticipatory use of force legitimate.⁵¹

The classic reference used to evaluate the legitimacy of preemption is the 1837 *Caroline* incident, which resulted in the formulation, by U.S. Secretary of State Daniel Webster, of two essential criteria for the justifiable resort to preemptive attack: necessity and proportionality.⁵² According to Secretary Webster, it is the attacker's responsibility to provide evidence of the necessity of the response determined by circumstances that are "instant, overwhelming, and leaving no choice of means and no moment of

⁵¹ Richard K. Betts, "Striking First: A History of Thankfully Lost Opportunities," p. 2.

⁵² The British troops sank the American ship, the *Caroline*, in US waters because it was used to provide supplies to insurrectionists against British rule in Canada. The US protested and demanded an apology and reparations. – in David M. Ackerman, CRS Report for Congress, Order Code RS21314, 11 April 2003, p. 2.

deliberation.”⁵³ In addition, the proportionality of the response related to the threat was intended to preclude an escalation of events: “the act, justified by the necessity of self-defense, must be limited by that necessity, and kept clearly within it.”⁵⁴

Overall, the legitimacy of the claim of anticipatory self-defense relies on compelling evidence that the attack is inevitable in the immediate future, leaving no time to employ other measures short of armed forces, and that the anticipatory action will reduce or eliminate the threat.⁵⁵

In most situations an armed attack will be perceived differently by the attacker and the attacked. Hence, the legitimate mechanisms for dispute resolution and decision-making such as the UN become increasingly significant in the process of assessing the degree to which the criteria developed by international law are met. An intense debate followed the adoption of the UN Charter, owing mainly to objections to the vagueness of its formulations and the UN’s power to infringe on national sovereignty.

In essence, the issues were disputed by the proponents of the two diverging worldviews embedded in the American strategic culture: multilateralists and unilateralists. As illustrated earlier, according to their beliefs, the multilateralists supported international institutions, while the isolationists repudiated the constraints those entail.

⁵³ Discussing *Caroline* case, Secretary of State Daniel Webster sent a letter to Lord Ashburton of August 6, 1842 - quoted in David M. Ackerman, CRS Report for Congress, Order Code RS21314, April 11, 2003, p. 2.

⁵⁴ Letter from Mr. Webster to Mr. Fox of April 24, 1841- quoted in David M. Ackerman, CRS Report for Congress, Order Code RS21314, April 11, 2003, p. 2.

⁵⁵ Neta C. Crawford, “The Slippery Slope to Preventive War,” *Ethics & International Affairs*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 2003, pp. 1-2.

Despite further efforts in 1970 and 1987 to bring more definitional precision to UN provisions' formulation,⁵⁶ the dispute produced a polarization of attitudes in two camps: "the restrictionists" and the "counter-restrictionists," each promoting distinct interpretations of the preemptive self-defense.⁵⁷

The restrictionists uphold a literal interpretation of Article 51, asserting that unilateral action for anticipatory self-defense is lawful if it meets the standards of the *Caroline* case.⁵⁸ They strongly support collective action and reserve to the Security Council the right to decide if the evidence presented qualifies the circumstances as legitimate self-defense.

Two historical cases illustrate the restrictionists' interpretation of UNSC practice in evaluating the legitimacy of the anticipatory use of force in self-defense: the 1967 Six-Day War, and Israel's 1981 attack on the Osirak reactor in Iraq. While the Security Council and the General Assembly rejected proposals to condemn Israel for its actions during the Six-Day War, in the case of the attack on the Osirak reactor the Security Council unanimously "condemn[ed] the military attack by Israel in clear violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international conduct."⁵⁹ The evidence confirms that, whereas Israeli behavior in the Six-Day War met the criteria for legitimate preemptive self defense established by Secretary Webster, in 1981 Israel's claim that Iraq's nuclear program posed a threat to its existence did not qualify as a compelling case of legitimate anticipatory self-defense. The first case was based on probable and imminent aggressive action by Egypt and other Arab states against Israel, while the latter case relied merely on Iraq's hostile policy toward Israel and a projected future capability to implement such a policy. Hence, the UNSC displayed reluctance in the case of the

⁵⁶ Efforts to bring more definitional precision to the UN Charter materialized in two declarations, subsequently promulgated by the General Assembly: the 1970 Declaration – prohibiting "propaganda, terror, and finance" as means to coercive action; and 1987 Declaration – prohibiting organizing or assisting in the execution of paramilitary, terrorist, or subversive acts – in William R. Slomanson, *Fundamental Perspectives on International Law*, p. 486.

⁵⁷Anthony Clark Arend, "International Law and the Preemptive Use of Military Force," *The Washington Quarterly*, Spring 2003, p. 92.

⁵⁸ David M. Ackerman, CRS Report for Congress, Order Code RS21314, "International Law and the Preemptive Use of Force Against Iraq," April 11, 2003, The Library of Congress, p. 3.

⁵⁹ UN Security Council Resolution 487, adopted 19 June 1981, quoted in David M. Ackerman, CRS Report for Congress, Order Code RS21314, "International Law and the Preemptive Use of Force Against Iraq," April 11, 2003, The Library of Congress, p. 5.

1981 attack on the Osirak reactor to accept as a legitimate justification for self-defense a case built on circumstances that did not meet all the criteria accredited by the *Caroline* case.

The UNSC's unwillingness to legitimate the preemptive use of force in the Osirak reactor case may be explained by members' anxiety about the possible consequences of lowering the threshold of established criteria for anticipatory self-defense – i.e., increased instability due to greater latitude for the legitimate use of force. In summary, the restrictionists consider the use of preemptive force legitimate under the UN Charter only if the criteria of necessity and proportionality are met. In their view, more relaxed criteria do not provide a sufficient basis for legitimacy.

Conversely, the counter-restrictionists consider this a narrow interpretation of the UN Charter, providing protection to “the aggressor’s right to the first strike.”⁶⁰ They express skepticism regarding the UNSC’s monopoly on the authority to legitimize the use of force. Instead, they argue for the validity of the “regime of customary international law” established by state practice, which, they maintain, endorses the doctrine of anticipatory self-defense.⁶¹

The UNSC’s authority to determine threats to the peace (Article 39 of the Charter) is emphasized by counter-restrictionists as a source of legitimacy for anticipatory action. They claim that in certain circumstances waiting for the attack to occur would be too risky because it would diminish the chances for successful retaliation. Moreover, they contend that customary law mirrors the evolution of the international security environment more accurately than the UN Charter by encompassing new challenges not addressed by the Charter, which was written in 1945.

Examining the UN Charter and the evolution of customary international law, counter-restrictionists argue that today, “given [the] historical record of violations, it seems very difficult to conclude that the [UN] charter is truly controlling of state

⁶⁰ Statement by Sir Humphrey Waldock, quoted in Roberts, Guy, “The Counterproliferation Self-Help Paradigm: A Legal Regime for Enforcing the Norm Prohibiting the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction,” *Denver Journal of International Law and Policy*, 1999.

⁶¹Anthony Clark Arend, “International Law and the Preemptive Use of Military Force,” p. 90.

practice.”⁶² Moreover, they hold that “it can no longer be said that any customary norm of state practice constrains the preemptive use of force,”⁶³ considering the numerous cases that attest the opposite. The counter-restrictionists conclude that customary international law reflects prevailing state practice and that the UN Charter is inconsistent with customary international law and current realities.

The restrictionist and counter-restrictionist attitudes are the result of competing worldviews corresponding to the two schools of thought embedded in the American strategic culture – i.e., multilateralists and unilateralists. As illustrated earlier, throughout the Cold War the two views have been reconciled by the American political leadership under the umbrella of a multilateralist approach.

This chapter presented a brief overview of the American strategic culture in the post-World War II era. It analyzed the diverging tendencies and worldviews, as well as national and international norms on the use of force. It aimed to provide the background for a better understanding of the traditional national values promoted by the United States throughout the last half of century.

The next two chapters develop in detail the American attitude on the use of force as reflected in the U.S. national security policy during and after the Cold War, as a material expression of the overarching worldview. The goal is to provide the necessary insight on the evolution of the American view on the use of force, as influenced by the overall worldview. This will help determine if the Bush doctrine of preemption represents a shift in the traditional American strategic culture or merely a continuation of previous preferences.

⁶²Anthony Clark Arend, “International Law and the Preemptive Use of Military Force,” p. 100.

⁶³ Glennon, Michael, “The Fog of Law: Self Defense, Inherence and Incoherence in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter,” *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy*, quoted in Anthony Clark Arend, “International Law and the Preemptive Use of Military Force,” p. 101.

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III. THE US NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY DURING THE COLD WAR

A. THE PREDICAMENT OF THE AMERICAN NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY FORMULATION

As stated in Chapter II, from the Truman administration throughout the Cold War, deterrence was one of the overriding concepts that guided American strategic thinking, consistently reflected in declaratory strategy.

Emerging as an alternative to the “cheap-victory strategy,”⁶⁴ the concept of deterrence theory reached the status of an elaborated strategy only after World War II. This was the result of the desire to prevent great power wars, stirred by the dramatic experience of the two World Wars and the ascending evolution of warfare toward increasing levels of destructiveness. The atomic bomb was the innovation that contributed substantially, through its greater degree of destructiveness, to the shift of the dominant preoccupation with war fighting towards war-prevention.

For the most part, the concept of deterrence marked a departure from the traditional manner of coping with a military threat, typically accomplished through military engagement either “via a preemptive attack, or containing it by a vigorous defense.”⁶⁵ By contrast, the goal of deterrence theory was to prevent war, thus eliminating the necessity to conduct combat operations. It called for modifying the adversary’s intentions by making the consequences of aggression appear too destructive to be contemplated – i.e., unacceptable damage. This strategy provoked intense debates as many argued that, in addition to attempts to deter threats, contingency planning for combat operations was still necessary.

Although the U.S. deterrence posture was initially more a reality than a policy, the loss of the American nuclear monopoly challenged the credibility of that posture. Its preservation would require constant and strenuous efforts to develop an actual strategy.

⁶⁴ “The idea was to ensure that the great costs, destruction, and loss of life would fall mainly on the other side... In addition, cheap-victory solutions ... could be highly destabilizing because they usually required striking by surprise or before the other party was fully prepared.” Patrick M. Morgan, *Deterrence Now*, Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 6-7.

⁶⁵ Patrick M. Morgan, *Deterrence Now*, p. 13.

Since nuclear war was seen as national suicide, the credibility of the retaliatory threat rested on rational strategic objectives consonant with realistic and effective planning of the procedures for accomplishing them.

Essentially, the assessment of the new security environment after 1945 linked the deterrent threat to “the problem of use.”⁶⁶ A strong belief in the likelihood of imminent conflict with the Soviet Union was determined by assumptions about the enemy’s intentions – i.e., the USSR was viewed as aggressive and “opportunity driven.”⁶⁷ Hence, the concept of deterrence was adopted as an essential element of the American national strategy, ultimately reaching the status of a comprehensive concept of “cooperative security management.”⁶⁸

1. The Policy Debate

In the process of conceptualization, American strategic thought reached a consensus with regard to a rough description of the deterrence concept. However, opinions were sharply divided on two overarching issues: designing and operationalizing deterrence – i.e., what it took to deter and what capabilities were needed at the conventional and nuclear level.

According to Patrick M. Morgan, while the first debate produced four schools of thought – i.e., the rejection school, minimum deterrence, massive destruction, and war-fighting⁶⁹ - the latter generated three positions – i.e., “deterrence by a capacity to fight then escalate, by a capacity to deny, and by a capacity to defeat.”⁷⁰

The Rejection School strongly opposed deterrence in the nuclear age, emphasizing the internal inconsistencies of the concept, the danger of human error, the reprehensible motivations involved in the “arms race,” the aggravation of the security dilemma, and “the immorality of holding whole societies hostage.”⁷¹

⁶⁶ Marc Trachtenberg, *History & Strategy*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1991, p. 7.

⁶⁷ Patrick M. Morgan, *Deterrence Now*, p. 9.

⁶⁸ Patrick M. Morgan, *Deterrence Now*, p. 4.

⁶⁹ Patrick M. Morgan, *Deterrence Now*, pp. 22-26.

⁷⁰ Patrick M. Morgan, *Deterrence Now*, p. 25.

⁷¹ Patrick M. Morgan, *Deterrence Now*, p. 23.

The supporters of the Minimum Deterrence School advocated achieving deterrence through a small nuclear arsenal and argued that the devastating power of nuclear weapons would overcome any credibility and stability problems. They proposed moderating the “arms race” to minimize crises and undermine incentives as well as capabilities for preemption.

At the other end of the spectrum, the Massive Destruction School recommended relying on a threat of complete destruction as a deterrent. The logic was to highlight the suicidal nature of any attempt to engage in aggression, nuclear or non-nuclear, owing to the risk of escalation. This unique feature of nuclear weapons would override credibility and stability problems. For this school the danger resided in “pressures to develop first-strike, counterforce capabilities or effective strategic defenses.”⁷²

Finally, the War-fighting School considered credibility and stability to require a capability to fight and win at any level, thus lowering the opponent’s prospects of “military success and political survival.”⁷³ A wide range of capabilities therefore had to be developed in order to be able to defend national and allied interests.

Although the first two schools of thought influenced the decision-making process, most of the policy formulations were more heavily influenced by the last two. Essentially, the divergence of the solutions envisaged derived from different initial assumptions about the strategic conditions and the nature of the opponent. While the Massive Destruction School was rooted in the multilateralist creed, the War-fighting School was the expression of the unilateralist worldview. As illustrated in Chapter II, despite their common internationalist orientation, they were divided by disagreement about the manner in which the United States should pursue its interest.

Overall, their association with the multilateralist and unilateralist worldview resulted in different views on the utility of nuclear weapons. The war-fighting proponents argued for the application of “operational art to the nuclear era,”⁷⁴ stressing the necessity

⁷² Patrick M. Morgan, *Deterrence Now*, p. 24.

⁷³ Patrick M. Morgan, *Deterrence Now*, p. 25

⁷⁴ Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, Third Edition, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, p. 386.

to prepare for the contingency of deterrence failure by building capabilities to fight.⁷⁵ They attributed utility to nuclear weapons in bargaining for political objectives, through escalation dominance.

Conversely, Massive Destruction supporters emphasized the unique nature of nuclear weapons as the fundamental deterrent, given the overwhelming costs they could impose.⁷⁶ They sought an adaptation of strategic thinking to the particularities of the nuclear world with regard to the ways in which force may be employed. For them, the new weapons denied national governments the function of defense in the traditional sense, by altering the government's ability to protect the nation in the absence of the opponent's cooperation.⁷⁷ The previous reliance on military advantage as the method of protection was replaced with the tacit cooperation of the two opponents.

The endurance of the two views resulted in two overarching strategies: "assured destruction" and counterforce or war-fighting⁷⁸ - i.e., deterrence by threat of punishment and deterrence by denial and defense. The former relied on assured retaliation through secure second-strike capability, while the latter emphasized multiple force options. Consequently, targeting philosophy was viewed differently - while the first one prescribed countervalue attacks, aiming to employ the threat of punishment, the second recommended counterforce targets, denying the opponent the capability to win. In practice, the United States has since the early 1960s maintained both types of capabilities.

What is more, the matters were further complicated by the influence of those who did not believe in any kind of utility of the use of force. Advocating disarmament and arms control, they argued that security can be achieved not only through defense, - i.e., the use of force, but also through the lack of force of both sides. Their concerns were focused on the adequacy of American efforts to deter Soviet attacks.⁷⁹ They advocated

⁷⁵ Amos A Jordan et al., *American National Security*, p. 275.

⁷⁶ The Massive Destruction school of thought shares the main policy prescription of "assured destruction" force sizing - that is, retaining sufficient survivable second-strike capabilities to attack an enemy's society.

⁷⁷ For a detailed description of the influence of nuclear weapons on politics see Robert Jervis, *The Illlogic of American Nuclear Strategy*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1984.

⁷⁸ Sam C. Sarkesian et al., *US National Security, Policymakers, Processes, and Politics*, pp. 282-283.

⁷⁹ Richard Smoke, *National Security and the Nuclear Dilemma*, p. 140.

the introduction of a proper variety of choices of strategic weapons in US strategy so that not just defense would matter, but also possibilities for restraining the arms race. Their influence brought about, by the 1960's, consensus among strategists that an analysis of security should consider both defense needs and arms control, for a stable deterrence.⁸⁰

The divergent approaches to security endured throughout the American strategic thinking, comprising the fundamental dilemma of the American national security policy formulation in the nuclear era. Although modified over time in conjunction with changes in the security environment and technology, the initial concepts have been permanently present in the public debate and in the decision making inventory of options. Consequently, they have gained primacy at different times in response to transformations in the security environment, technological progress, as well as the personal judgments of the leadership, resulting in shifts in policy. Overall, the approaches focused on employing the value of nuclear weapons in security strategies – i.e. war-fighting and assured destruction – held more significance by providing actual plans to defend which have reached the status of policies. Nonetheless, the advocacy of disarmament and arms control influenced the policy formulation as well.

B. OVERVIEW OF THE U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY

1. The War-Fighting School in National Security Policy

The war-fighting school of thought received classic expression in the NSC 68. The document represented the first comprehensive U.S. national security analysis in the Cold War era, aiming to reconcile strategy with structure of forces, by integrating the force capability with the overall strategy.⁸¹ It laid down the fundamental logic of deterrence operating at multiple levels of violence.⁸² Its rationale was determined by anxieties about strategic stalemate. Like George F. Kennan's containment policy, the

⁸⁰ The efforts for disarmament and arms control resulted in the 1963 Limited Test Ban Treaty outlawing nuclear explosion in the atmosphere, under water, or in outer space, 1967 Outer Space Treaty and 1971 Seabed Treaty prohibiting placing any weapons of mass destruction into earth orbit, on any celestial bodies, and on the ocean floor, 1925 Geneva Protocol banned the use of chemical and biological agents for warfare, 1968 Nonproliferation Treaty committing non-nuclear states not to obtain nuclear weapons or makings, and nuclear states not to provide them, 1972 AMB treaty and SALT I, 1974 Vladivostok Accords.

⁸¹ Richard Smoke, *National Security and the Nuclear Dilemma*, p. 58.

⁸² Richard Smoke, *National Security and the Nuclear Dilemma*, p. 61.

strategy was intended to “induce a change in the nature of the Soviet system”⁸³ through means other than all-out war. For this purpose, the deterrence posture was to be strengthened through various forces capable of dealing with piecemeal aggression and subversion in both limited and all-out war. It embedded the Truman administration’s effort to build a stronger military posture, in order to cope with the 1948-1949 events and the resulting sense of vulnerability.⁸⁴

The underlying logic was further elaborated by the flexible response strategy adopted by the Kennedy administration. Influenced by the stability-instability paradox,⁸⁵ it was concerned about the increased risk of conflict at lower levels of violence as a result of strategic stalemate. It proposed a counter-force approach and capability, including significant conventional forces. The overarching goal was to control conflict escalation and limit the damage to US forces. Thus, retaining the assured destruction forces in reserve, the doctrine rendered doubtful the resort to nuclear weapons in a conventional war. It emphasized the utility of multiple options in crisis situations as opposed to preset war plans.⁸⁶ Offering strategic options for fighting and winning a nuclear war, the strategy was intended to strengthen the deterrence posture’s credibility.⁸⁷ Furthermore, the escalation dominance capability was supposed to allow for a political process of negotiation between the opponents, promoting stability.⁸⁸

Similarly, the Nixon administration announced a counter-force strategy, at times called the Schlesinger doctrine, which aimed at assuring control of escalation and

⁸³ Paul Nitze, “The Need for a National Strategy,” address delivered at Army War College, Carlisle, Barracks, August 27, 1958, quoted in Amos A Jordan et al., *American National Security*, p. 69.

⁸⁴ The events of 1948-1949 that determined an enhanced sense of vulnerability among the American officials were: the communists’ won in the Chinese civil war; European demands for military commitment based on the North Atlantic Treaty; the first Soviet atomic test (August).

⁸⁵ For a detailed description of the concept of “stability-instability paradox,” see Robert Jervis, *The Illogic of American Nuclear Strategy*.

⁸⁶ Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, p. 221.

⁸⁷ The strategy of flexible response advised fighting capabilities based on sizable NATO conventional army formed by European as well as US contribution.

⁸⁸ Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, p. 206.

reducing collateral damage.⁸⁹ It advocated the development of a wide range of nuclear options, stressing the importance of capabilities for “smaller strikes which were to be counter-force rather than counter-city in character.”⁹⁰

The rationale was reaffirmed by the Carter administration, which promoted what it called the countervailing strategy.⁹¹ Briefly, the strategy recommended deterrence by denial – i.e., denying the Soviets any military advantage at all levels of violence. It proposed a firm military basis for nuclear weapons, developing operational plans to use them based on “advances in the technologies of precision-guidance and small-yield warheads, and especially those of command and control.”⁹² Essentially, conservative strategists argued for contingency planning in case deterrence through “mutual assured destruction” capabilities failed. It envisaged a variety of types of counterforce options and advised preservation of US superior military position. It claimed that developing escalation dominance would communicate resolve, while keeping potential conflict under control.

This particular approach was taken further during the Reagan administration, which introduced more ambitious plans of winning a nuclear confrontation. The emphasis shifted from countervailing to “prevailing,”⁹³ aiming to deny the Soviet Union a range of limited nuclear options by developing strategic modernization programs.⁹⁴ Proponents argued that the Reagan strategy was the solution to the nuclear dilemma, that it would lead U.S. strategy away from mutual assured destruction.

2. The Assured Destruction School in National Security Policy

On the other hand, the logic of the assured destruction strategies has been embedded in the Massive Retaliation and Mutual Assured Destruction doctrines.

⁸⁹ Schlesinger doctrine was announced in 1974 National Security Decision Memorandum 242, quoted in Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, p. 360.

⁹⁰ Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, p. 361.

⁹¹ The countervailing strategies were announced in 1977 Presidential Directive-18 and 1979 Presidential Directive 59, in Amos A Jordan, William J. Taylor, Jr., and Michael J. Mazarr, *American National Security*, p. 278-387.

⁹² Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, p. 386.

⁹³ Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, p. 388.

⁹⁴ Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, p. 387.

It was the Eisenhower administration's New Look policy that recommended "massive retaliation" as a military doctrine. The military strategy relied heavily on the exploitation of US technological prowess. U.S. superiority in strategic nuclear air power and tactical nuclear weapons⁹⁵ was expected to strengthen the US deterrent posture. It was considered to reconcile the goals of economic growth and increased military strength, resolving the dilemma of security versus solvency.⁹⁶ The US technological advantage was designed to reverse the pattern of interaction in a war with the USSR,⁹⁷ as revealed in 1954 by Secretary of State Dulles: "depend primarily upon a great capacity to retaliate instantly and by means and at places of our own choosing."⁹⁸ Driven by a belief that strategic stalemate would grant greater stability, through a mutual reluctance to initiate war, Dulles held that the strength of the deterrence posture depended on increasing the cost of an attack through the threat of massive nuclear retaliation.

Similar assumptions, enhanced by technological progress, prompted the Nixon administration to adopt the strategic sufficiency doctrine⁹⁹ as a guideline for strategic planning for US forces. The assessment of the strategic balance was characterized by a rough nuclear parity and the further development of secure second-strike capabilities by both superpowers. In this context, the concept of détente gained primacy, as a manner to lessen tensions and hostilities. The overarching goal was to achieve and preserve a stable strategic balance, which ensured a situation of Mutual Assured Destruction. The underlying logic was supported by concepts of "non-zero sum games,"¹⁰⁰ in which the two superpowers agreed that protection against each other was not possible without the opponent's cooperation. The doctrine prescribed four guiding principles: assured destruction, flexible nuclear options, crisis stability, and perceived equality.¹⁰¹

⁹⁵ Amos A Jordan, et al., *American National Security*, p. 72.

⁹⁶ Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, p. 74.

⁹⁷ The US technological advantage was designed to reverse the pattern of interaction in a war with the USSR by leaving the first move to the East, but the US would decide on the rules for subsequent stages, in Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, p. 73.

⁹⁸ John Foster Dulles, "The Evolution of Foreign Policy," Department of State Bulletin 30, January 25, 1954 – quoted in Amos A Jordan et al., *American National Security*, p. 72.

⁹⁹ Amos A Jordan et al., *American National Security*, p. 79.

¹⁰⁰ Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, p. 235.

¹⁰¹ Amos A. Jordan et al., *American National Security*, p. 80.

3. Prevention in U.S. Policy During the Cold War

In retrospect, the evolution of American strategic policy during the Cold War illustrates an unrelenting struggle to reconcile conventional patterns of thinking with the unique requirements of nuclear deterrence. The concepts of preventive and preemptive attack had a long history, rooted in security dilemma and endorsed by the “cheap victory strategy.” Although the nuclear weapons canceled the traditional notion of cheap victory through their high level of destruction, the search for effective war-fighting strategies never ended as an intrinsic component of national defense preoccupations. By and large, although neither preventive nor preemptive concepts were implemented by the U.S. government during the Cold War, their shadow loomed large over the process of assessment of the strategic situation, notably with reference to the USSR’s perceptions and behavior, influencing U.S. decisions about strategy and force structure.

As Marc Trachtenberg has observed, in the early nuclear era, although ideas of preventive war were viewed with hostility by the most important U.S. officials, the thesis of preventive war was “common” both in official and unofficial circles, favored by both military and civilian observers.¹⁰²

At the time, preventive war thinking was favored by several factors. First, it was the preset assumptions about the nature of the enemy and the consequences of the end of the American nuclear monopoly. In other words some observers were convinced that the Soviet Union’s intentions were aggressive, and opportunity-driven and that the Soviet leaders might exploit a window of opportunity generated by the decline of American supremacy. Secondly, the conviction that the military balance played a decisive role in American-Soviet relations generated great interest in preserving the American strategic advantage. Hence, people anxious about the perspective of nuclear stalemate and persuaded that successful deterrence would depend on maintenance of the U.S. position of “nuclear attack-defense superiority,”¹⁰³ depicted preventive attack to be “the last

¹⁰² Marc Trachtenberg, *History & Strategy*, p. 107.

¹⁰³ Paul Nitze quoted in Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, p. 118.

chance for a plausible alternative.”¹⁰⁴ Therefore, the advantage offered by a “first blow” in the effort to prevent the Soviets from acquiring nuclear weapons was contemplated with great interest in some circles.

The initial reluctance of American officials to “share” the atomic bomb was taken further by proponents of the idea that the United States should take action before its nuclear advantage could be neutralized.¹⁰⁵ In these circumstances, General Leslie Groves and others considered preventive war a “more positive policy” than passively allowing the Soviet Union to acquire nuclear power.¹⁰⁶

Hence, although preventive war was ruled out by NSC 68, some of its key points were identical to the preventive war arguments.¹⁰⁷ It predicted a highly unstable strategic environment, as a consequence of the capability gap between the United States and the USSR. Moreover, according to the NSC 68, due to Soviet Union’s hostile expansionist intentions, atomic stockpiles would lead not to stalemate, but to war.

By and large, a calculated and gradual coercion was visualized, with the goal “to check and to roll back the Kremlin’s drive for world domination,”¹⁰⁸ by strengthening the US military posture. However, the document was characterized by a built-in contradiction because, although it used preventive war arguments, it recommended a military buildup as sufficient for the accomplishment of a Soviet rollback.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, despite the belief in imminent war and the recommendations for the United States “to make its stand sooner rather than later,”¹¹⁰ NSC 68 proposed a cautious approach pending the rebuilding of American power and warned against the danger of provoking a Soviet preemptive attack. Thus, although the enthusiasts advocating an expansion of the Korean conflict into a general war with Russia were typically “ignorant

¹⁰⁴ Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, p. 121.

¹⁰⁵ One of the proponents of the preventive action to preclude loss of American monopoly of the atomic bomb was General Leslie Groves, the wartime commander of the Manhattan Project – in Marc Trachtenberg, *History & Strategy*, p. 100.

¹⁰⁶ Marc Trachtenberg, *History & Strategy*, p. 103.

¹⁰⁷ Marc Trachtenberg, *History & Strategy*, p. 108.

¹⁰⁸ Marc Trachtenberg, *History & Strategy*, p. 109.

¹⁰⁹ Marc Trachtenberg, *History & Strategy*, p. 111.

¹¹⁰ Marc Trachtenberg, *History & Strategy*, p. 147.

of military realities,”¹¹¹ the preventive war thesis loomed large in the thinking of insiders as well, though from a different angle. The mainstream official position, shared by the State Department and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, recommended caution due to American vulnerability in the face of a global war “at that point.”¹¹² The primary goal was a build up of American power for what was considered to be an imminent war with the Soviet Union.¹¹³

According to Marc Trachtenberg, it was the Eisenhower administration’s strategy that factored in the preventive war thinking. Thus, the assertive stance in the New Look and Massive Retaliation policy was a direct result of preset assumptions about Soviet intentions, enhanced by preventive war logic and empowered by a resurgence of American military power in 1952-1953. Essentially, it was a shift merely in the declaratory policy. As the underlying pattern of thinking had been created by the previous administration, the shift was finally favored by the Truman administration’s pursuit of the NSC 68 military build up.¹¹⁴ Hence, while the new stance in the Massive Retaliation appeared more aggressive than other strategies, the reality was that prevention has been a very influential in the beginning of the atomic age in one form or another,¹¹⁵ as President Truman’s statements of 1952 illustrate: “there wasn’t much of a defense in prospect except a vigorous offense.”¹¹⁶

4. Preemption in the Cold War American Policy

Nonetheless, objections related to morality and constitutional provisions, as well as conscious efforts of mutual self-restraint to prevent crisis escalation, transferred the interest toward preemptive action.

It was Albert Wohlstetter’s work and his concern about the stability of the deterrence strategy that emphasized the vulnerability of strategic forces to a surprise attack. He underscored the spiral effect of mutual incentives for preemptive attacks

¹¹¹ Marc Trachtenberg, *History & Strategy*, p. 122.

¹¹² Marc Trachtenberg, *History & Strategy*, p. 124.

¹¹³ Marc Trachtenberg, *History & Strategy*, pp. 124-126.

¹¹⁴ Marc Trachtenberg, *History & Strategy*, p. 127.

¹¹⁵ Marc Trachtenberg, *History & Strategy*, p. 134.

¹¹⁶ Marc Trachtenberg, *History & Strategy*, p. 134.

triggered by the vulnerability of U.S. strategic forces. The logic of his concept of a “delicate balance of terror” was sustained by anxiety about a possible Soviet surprise attack and American interest to attack preemptively in a crisis.¹¹⁷ Both positions were seen as consequences of strategic vulnerability. Wohlstetter advocated rationalization of strategy to employ the use of force in a controlled and credible manner.¹¹⁸ Some took the argument even further, suggesting abdication altogether to threaten opponent’s strategic forces, either directly or indirectly in order to avoid the provocation of a preemptive attack. The end result of this pattern of thinking was the doctrine of strategic stability and mutual assured destruction, contributing to the American thinking on arms control.

Eventually, the perceived utility of preventive or preemptive action was substantially undermined in the official policies, leaving room for a willingness to accept coexistence.¹¹⁹ This was the result of economic restraints, negative impact on the alliance with Europe, the realization that to some extent previous concerns about the Soviets’ intentions and risk of war were exaggerated, as well as the image of catastrophic consequences of a nuclear war.¹²⁰

Regardless of the angle from which the preemptive logic was viewed, it was rooted in the uncertainties about the feasibility of containment strategy and stability of deterrence. Its proponents recommend improved, flexible military capabilities that would offer leaders adequate options to deny the opponent the means for victory and enable the U.S. to fight and win a war in various contingencies.

5. The Overall Outlook of the U.S. National Security Policy

Despite the cyclical variation of American declaratory strategic policy between conflicting concepts, the forces and targeting planning have changed rather less, essentially shifting emphasis among the options articulated in Secretary McNamara’s

¹¹⁷ Marc Trachtenberg, *History & Strategy*, pp. 18-24.

¹¹⁸ Marc Trachtenberg, *History & Strategy*, p. 31.

¹¹⁹ Marc Trachtenberg, *History & Strategy*, pp. 139, 141, 145-146.

¹²⁰ Marc Trachtenberg, *History & Strategy*, p. 135.

flexible response.¹²¹ The Triad doctrine, recommending the development of three types of strategic offensive forces¹²² for three types of attack massive constituted the foundation for subsequent improvements.¹²³

As Colin Gray noted, “nuclear deterrence strategies were tantamount to contingent nuclear war-fighting strategies,”¹²⁴ as the balance between the fear of instability and of lacking a possible war-survival advantage if deterrence failed has, constantly been tipped in favor of the latter.¹²⁵

The gap between the psychological approach of the deterrence doctrine and the heavy reliance on security studies of a realist paradigm hampered an accurate appreciation of subtleties of a “national and political character of conflicts, shaped by social and cultural details of the motivations, perceptions that drive challenges and responses.”¹²⁶

The lack of historical perspective and empirical data for analysis in the effort to design a theory of deterrence, which above all assumed a firm basis of psychological analysis, resulted in built-in inconsistencies and an amalgamation of conflicting prescriptions. This gave a “cyclical character ... [to the] debates”¹²⁷ on American national security issues. The resilience of the different perspectives reinforced this pattern.

In retrospect, the Cold War period is usually perceived as characterized by stability due to the bipolar structure of the international relations, enhanced by overall successful endeavors to prevent a world war. However, the field of security was highly problematic. The United States shifted back and forth between anxieties about its security

¹²¹ Robert A. Levine, *The Strategic Nuclear Debate*, Santa Monica, CA, RAND Corporation, 1987, p. vii.

¹²² The Triad doctrine was founded on three types of strategic offensive forces: ICBMs, SLBMs, and bombers.

¹²³ The Triad doctrine was envisaged for three types of attacks: retaliation, limited nuclear countervalue attacks, and counterforce strikes.

¹²⁴ Colin Gray cited in Sam C. Sarkesian et al., *US National Security, Policymakers, Processes, and Politics*, p. 284.

¹²⁵ Patrick M. Morgan, *Deterrence Now*, p. 33.

¹²⁶ Patrick M. Morgan, *Deterrence Now*, p. 286.

¹²⁷ Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, p. XVI.

and moments of superiority and between conflicting recommendation, each perceiving the others as irresponsible and hazardous. Finally, the cyclical nature of the quest for security was broken by the shift from counterforce primacy to the focus on stability.

This chapter portrayed the evolution of the U.S. military strategy in the Cold War era. The analysis followed the debate among the diverging patterns of thinking and their influence on the mainstream policy orientation. The scrutiny illustrates major trends in the American national security policy and the causal explanation that favored those specific preferences. This offers indications with regards to the process of formation of the American view on the use of force, patterns of perceptions and predominant strategic preferences of behavior to cope with the perceived threat. Ultimately, the overview of the influence the prevention and preemption concepts bore on the U.S. strategic policy provides a sound background for the analysis of the Bush doctrine of preemption in light of the American strategic culture.

The next chapter will conduct a similar analysis focused on the post-Cold War period.

IV. THE US NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY IN POST-COLD WAR ERA

A. THE POST-COLD WAR U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY

At the end of the Cold War, according to the U.S. position of unchallenged super-power, the American political leadership once again had to tackle the challenge of designing “rules and principles” for a new world order.¹²⁸

Apparently the process of reassessment depicted the new security environment as free of confrontation, lacking competing ideology that would threaten Western democratic values, and an immediate military threat to the US physical security. Nonetheless, the liberation from the discipline imposed by the Cold War generated a volatile political and security environment marked by regional antagonisms, great domestic political instability, ethnic conflict, civil wars, waves of migration and refugees, and environmental degradation. As constraints induced by the great powers confrontation vanished, political and economic evolutions that previously challenged the system management surfaced more fervently, posing questions about standards for national and global governance.

1. The Policy Debate

By and large, the two predominant views of nuclear weapons’ utility – i.e., minimalists and maximalists - were an extension of the Cold War arguments, preserving a similar line of reasoning as well as the dilemma of the use of force in the nuclear era.¹²⁹

The guidance offered by maximalists with regards to military planning envisaged large nuclear forces and thorough planning to employ them in various circumstances were advised.¹³⁰ At the other end of the spectrum, the minimalists were advising reduced nuclear forces to support a minimum deterrence policy. According to them, the only role for nuclear weapons was to deter a direct nuclear attack on the United States.

¹²⁸ John Ikenberry, *After Victory*, p. 3.

¹²⁹ The minimalist and maximalist schools of thought represented the Massive Destruction and War-fighting schools of thought, materialized in assured destruction and counterforce, or war-fighting strategies. For a detailed discussion see chapter III of this thesis. The two overarching military doctrines and strategies were rooted in diverging worldviews described in chapter II of this thesis – i.e., multilateralists and unilateralists.

¹³⁰ Amos A. Jordan et al., *American National Security*, p. 279.

Ever faithful to their Cold War inheritance, the maximalist school advocated war-fighting plans resting on counterforce capabilities. They claimed that the United States should avoid having preset constraints and use its nuclear posture to threaten, thus deter, nuclear, chemical and biological attacks. Moreover, the development of war-fighting strategies and capabilities would preclude violence at the lower levels, strengthening the credibility of the deterrence posture.

Conversely, the minimalists recommended the “no first use” policy and opposed the war-fighting strategies and counterforce capabilities, considering them provocative and generators of instability. They viewed them as undermining the accomplishments embedded in the Nonproliferation Treaty.¹³¹ The minimalists believed in the unique nature of nuclear weapons as real deterrent, due to opponent’s anxiety over the overwhelming costs imposed by them. Moreover, they argued that nuclear weapons contributed to uphold suspicions and tension between the United States and the Soviet Union, sustaining the Cold War longer.¹³² Hence, they stressed the undermined utility of strategic nuclear weapons by the significant role played by political transformation in bringing about the end of the Cold War.

B. OVERVIEW OF THE U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY

With this legacy of the schools of thought that determined the U.S. national security policy in the past, the American policymaking community had to tackle the challenges resulting from the specificities of the new security environment. The conceptual framework required transformations in order to deal with the volatile political and security environment that characterized the post-Cold War era. The full realization of the effects of interdependence and globalization, generated concern of spillover effects. This in turn stirred interest in a more pro-active type of policies, including the need for a military force prepared to engage. Although this understanding crystallized as early as the first Bush administration, the war-fighting strategies were alleviated by concern for preserving the stability of the international system and ideological drive. Therefore, the first two post-Cold War administrations – i.e., George H. W. Bush and William Jefferson Clinton – implemented cautious, gradual transformations in the national security policy,

¹³¹ Amos A. Jordan et al., *American National Security*, p. 282.

¹³² Patrick M. Morgan, *Deterrence Now*, pp. 39-41.

balanced with efforts to offer reassurance to the other actors in the system of international relations. It was not until the second Bush administration that the American national security policy shifted toward a firmer stance to manage the challenges posed by the post-Cold War era.

1. The Transition Period (George H. W. Bush Administration: 1989-1993)

Consequently, the 1991 U.S. National Security Strategy acknowledged the need for new terms of reference for nuclear deterrence, along the lines of the structural transformation of the security environment. The awareness of the trans-national treats and spillover effects triggered the proclamation of the regional conflicts as the new organizing principle for American military forces, in light of the interdependence and fragmentation of the international political system.¹³³ As a result, a shift of the military strategy has been announced from containing the spread of communism through deterrence toward a more flexible strategy.

The new strategic deterrence and defense were intended to offer a wide range of response options and a protection system. To roll back proliferation, a transfer of “the compass on arms control from East-West to North-South for a much-expanded discussion of policy” was announced.¹³⁴

With regards to force structure, the document confirmed the continuity of reliance on the traditional Cold War Triad,¹³⁵ while announcing its modernization for enhanced effectiveness of deterrence. The perceived lack of imminent threat portrayed the vast American military capabilities inherited from the Cold War era as being excessive.¹³⁶

Thus, a defense build-down was advocated, including the 1991 President Bush’s decision to unilaterally reduce tactical nuclear weapons as a manner to further the arms control process developed during the Cold War.¹³⁷

¹³³ Amos A. Jordan et al., *American National Security*, p. 548.

¹³⁴ Amos A. Jordan et al., *American National Security*, p. 85.

¹³⁵ The Cold War Triad comprised land-based missiles, strategic bombers and submarine-launched missiles,” in the August 1991 US National Security Strategy.

¹³⁶ Amos A. Jordan et al., *American National Security*, p. 545.

¹³⁷ Amos A. Jordan, *American National Security*, p. 545.

This was the result of the endurance of U.S. concerns about the Russian nuclear arsenal, in spite of fading Soviet strength. Hence, the arms control efforts were viewed as a way to preserve the relaxation of tension with the Soviet Union, still considered a significant player due to its nuclear arsenal. Moreover, the sociopolitical transformations in Russia and erosion of the center of authority stirred anxiety about possible mismanagement in dealing with WMD.¹³⁸ (*Russia's weakness*)

The *apprehension* about the disintegrating Soviet system was heightened by the August 1991 communist coup in Moscow. Hence, President Bush announced the determination to further negotiate reductions in strategic weapons and to adopt reciprocal measures to reduce tactical nuclear weapons.¹³⁹ These undertakings were intended to remove chances of accident as well as incentives for further nuclear proliferation,¹⁴⁰ leading to marginalization of the nuclear weapons.

Subsequently, the Congressional initiative entitled “Cooperative Threat Reduction Program,” advanced by Senators Sam Nunn and Richard Lugar, was adopted in 1996.¹⁴¹ It allowed for American support for cooperation with the Russian government in coping with the threat of inadvertent disaster caused by “loose nukes.”¹⁴² In addition, the initiative acknowledged the shift of the national security focus from strategic nuclear balance to regional and sub-regional levels, with great emphasis on trans-national threats and non-state actors.

Moreover, seeking to prevent possible perceptions of threat, Sir Michael Quinlan¹⁴³ launched the concept of disconnecting nuclear weapons possession from specific threats or scenarios, by assigning them the “use of last resort” status. The goal was to diminish the provocative nature of elaborated military doctrine involving nuclear

¹³⁸ Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, p. 416.

¹³⁹ The 1991 reductions in strategic weapons resulted in START I, signed on 31 July 1991. For further details, see Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, pp. 422-423.

¹⁴⁰ Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, pp. 422-423.

¹⁴¹ Peter L. Hays, Vincent J. Jodoin, Alan R. Van Tassel, *Countering the Proliferation and Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction*, New York, The McGraw-Hill Companies, Primis Custom Publishing, 1998, p. 41.

¹⁴² Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, p. 416.

¹⁴³ Sir Michael Quinlan is a “senior civil servant in the Ministry of Defence [who] had shaped Britain’s nuclear doctrine” – in Freedman Lawrence, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, p. 425.

weapons, as a source of credibility of the deterrence posture. With this in mind, the previous emphasis placed by the American nuclear strategy on doctrines, systems and tactics for escalation vanished.

The post-Cold War U.S. national security strategy shifted toward a greater importance on conventional war, while assigning strategic nuclear weapons the role of being used as the last resort. The nuclear deterrence endured only in the context of extended deterrence, preserved partially due to American geopolitical interests and concerns for further nuclear proliferation in its absence.¹⁴⁴ The non-strategic nuclear forces were to link “conventional defense to the broader strategic nuclear guarantee of the United States.”¹⁴⁵ In other words tactical nuclear weapons were to boost Western advantage in conventional encounter, while deterring opponents’ conventional attacks by reinforcing the threat of nuclear response in a military action.

Meanwhile, in the face of the retreating USSR, the conventional superiority of NATO countries had twofold effect: on one hand it allowed the West to marginalize the role of nuclear weapons in strategies, while on the other it boosted smaller powers’ interest in the proliferation of WMD as the only mean to deter the West.¹⁴⁶ Thus, the traditional interest in missile defense gained greater momentum in the nuclear debate.

Revitalized by conservative strategists the missile defense system debate was contested by opponents due to its provocative nature and effect of undermined deterrence.¹⁴⁷ Consequently, President Bush supported the development of ground-based interceptors to defend against an incoming bomber or missile attack.¹⁴⁸ This was to constitute the Global Protection against the Limited Strikes System (GPALS), stimulated

¹⁴⁴ Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, p. 419.

¹⁴⁵ US National Security Strategy of the United States, August 1991
(<http://www.fas.org/man/docs/918015-nss.htm> – consulted on 10 April 2004)

¹⁴⁶ Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, p. 426.

¹⁴⁷ Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, p. 429.

¹⁴⁸ Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, p. 429.

by the perceived threat of global ballistic-missile proliferation, as well as accidents due to political turmoil.¹⁴⁹ The GPALS was to pave the way toward Soviets' acquiescence for a missile defense system.

Overall, despite efforts to build mutual trust and induce benign political change, the Cold War underlying logic of the strategic policies was preserved, still relying on "the shape and size of the arsenal."¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, at the time, the US nuclear operations were still officially operating under President Regan's National Security Decision Directive 13, reflecting long-standing targeting strategies.¹⁵¹

The First Gulf War in fact generated the Western understanding of the shape of future military encounters. Briefly, the lesson learned by the West was that, on the background of atomic deterrent, one consequence of American technological advantage will be to trigger pursuit of asymmetrical conflict by smaller powers.¹⁵² The envisaged goal would be to undermine the Western determination to intervene in regional conflicts, and for that purpose countervalue target were considered to be likely. Official documents issued by the Clinton administration fully developed the argument.

2. Cautious Transformation (William Jefferson Clinton Administration: 1993-2001)

By and large, the Clinton administration was viewed as a period of stability, prudence and conservatism, lacking major initiatives in defense planning.¹⁵³ The two significant reviews of the defense policy emphasized the need to be able to fight "two simultaneous major regional contingencies."¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁹ US National Security Strategy of the United States, August 1991 (<http://www.fas.org/man/docs/918015-nss.htm> – consulted on 10 April 2004)

¹⁵⁰ Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, p. 415.

¹⁵¹ Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, p. 432.

¹⁵² 1995 Joint Doctrine and 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review, in Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, pp. 412-413.

¹⁵³ Amos A. Jordan et al., *American National Security*, p. 86.

¹⁵⁴ The two reviews of the defense policy during Clinton administration are Bottom-Up Review of 1993-1994 and the Quadrennial Defense Review of 1996-1997, in Amos A. Jordan et al., *American National Security*, p. 86.

Essentially, the 1993 Nuclear Posture Review concluded that the traditional American force structure¹⁵⁵ was to be retained due to enduring Russian threat, as well as extended deterrence to chemical and biological weapons.¹⁵⁶ The defense strategy was designed along three pillars: preventing the emergence of threats, deterring and defeating the existing threats by military force. Various mechanisms were to be used to implement the strategy.

Thus, the prevention of threats was to be achieved through confidence-building measures, promoting the spread of democracy overseas and countering the proliferation of WMD. The credibility of the deterrence strategy was to be fostered by a demonstrated will to use force when vital interests were threatened. For this purpose, effective nuclear force and forward-deployed conventional forces with enhanced projection capability were planned. The third pillar of the defense strategy was resting on “readiness, high technology weapons, and superior information systems, to ensure victory.”¹⁵⁷ All tasks were to be completed on the backdrop of multilateral security dialogues, which would help strengthen traditional alliances, build a partnership with Russia, and pursue a comprehensive engagement with China.¹⁵⁸

Nonetheless, as a result of the Desert Storm experience, the greatest concern was grounded in the proliferation of WMD.¹⁵⁹ Therefore, the 1997 U.S. National Military Strategy linked all four principal threats to U.S. security – i.e., “regional dangers, asymmetric challenges, transnational threats, and wild cards”¹⁶⁰ - to the WMD proliferation. The fundamental logic was that the possession of WMD was enabling regional powers to pursue ambitions by increasing the price of Western intervention to unacceptable levels. More importantly, the Desert Storm experience raised awareness

¹⁵⁵ The Triad of ICBMs, SLBMs and bombers.

¹⁵⁶ Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, p. 432.

¹⁵⁷ Amos A. Jordan et al., *American National Security*, p. 88.

¹⁵⁸ Amos A. Jordan et al., *American National Security*, p. 88.

¹⁵⁹ Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, p. 413.

¹⁶⁰ Peter Hays et al., *Countering the Proliferation and Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction*, p. 9.

about the limited ability of the Coalition forces to confront an adversary armed with NBC, as well as the political effect of their possession and potential use upon the civilian population.¹⁶¹

The Clinton administration tackled the issue in a twofold approach: continued efforts in the realm of arms control and disarmament, as well as endeavors to develop a more comprehensive military approach and capabilities to cope with the WMD threat. Hence, building on the work completed during the Bush administration, in 1993 President Clinton publicly announced the new concept of the Defense Counter-proliferation Initiative (DCI), centered on four elements: “prevention, roll back, deterrence, and adaptation.”¹⁶²

Initially, despite acknowledging the threat of WMD in regional conflicts¹⁶³ as asymmetrical means, counter-proliferation strategies were not incorporated in DoD planning. This decision was determined by the intense controversy within the American governmental circles about DCI. Furthermore, it was believed by the international community that DCI military component embedded a preemptive counter-force planning, with undermining results for nonproliferation diplomacy.¹⁶⁴ This contributed to the widespread perception of DCI as an excessively provocative initiative.

Hence, it was only after the development of thorough planning and extensive bilateral and multilateral efforts that acceptance by the international community was brought about.¹⁶⁵ Subsequent documents announced that balanced military planning has

¹⁶¹ Mitchel B. Wallerstein, “The Origins and Evolution of the Defense Counterproliferation Initiative” – ed. Peter L. Hays, Vincent J. Jodoin, Alan R. Van Tassel, *Countering the Proliferation and Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction*, p. 22-23.

¹⁶² For more details on DCI see Mitchel B. Wallerstein, “The Origins and Evolution of the Defense Counterproliferation Initiative” – ed. Peter L. Hays et al., *Countering the Proliferation and Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction*, p. 22.

¹⁶³ September 1993 Bottom-Up Review.

¹⁶⁴ DCI military component embedded a preemptive counter-force planning “implicitly threatening preemptive military action against those states that failed to give up suspected NBC weapons development programs and to participate in multilateral regimes and bilateral diplomatic arrangements,” in Mitchel B. Wallerstein, “The Origins and Evolution of the Defense Counterproliferation Initiative” – ed. Peter L. Hays et al., *Countering the Proliferation and Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction*, p. 25.

¹⁶⁵ Mitchel B. Wallerstein, “The Origins and Evolution of the Defense Counterproliferation Initiative” – ed. Peter L. Hays et al., *Countering the Proliferation and Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction*, p. 26.

been designed to strengthen and not undercut diplomatic efforts.¹⁶⁶ Hereafter, counter-proliferation strategies have been a key element of U.S. military planning, incorporated into the U.S. National Security Strategies to follow. Guidelines for its conduct have been developed along the lines of two broad categories: prevention and protection.¹⁶⁷

Overall, the strategy was founded on cautiously balanced diplomatic and military tactics. The improved technology security and export controls that would disrupt the trade of WMD were intended to deny proliferation. This was complemented by reassurance and dissuasion, which would eliminate the need to resort to NBC proliferation as a form of assuring security, while emphasizing the cost of proliferation. The means envisaged for this purpose were regional security dialogue, arms control, confidence-building measures, security assistance, and public diplomacy. Additionally, the measures to reverse proliferation helped to further expand the range of prevention, through programs such as Cooperative Threat Reduction.¹⁶⁸ Conversely, the protection category comprised military oriented solutions as well. These were based on improved capabilities to actively and passively defend, through defensive and offensive measures policies, plans, and programs.¹⁶⁹

With regards to missile defense, in the final years of President Clinton's administration plans were developed for a National Missile Defense. They were intended to defend against small threats from rogue states, – i.e. states with distressed and reckless regimes, reacting to regional concerns.¹⁷⁰ Nevertheless, concerns about Russian and

¹⁶⁶ Presidential and DOD Directives, 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review, and the Defense Planning Guidance.

¹⁶⁷ DCI - the prevention was to be carried out through denial, reassurance and dissuasion, and reversal; while the protection was to be achieved through deterrence, active and passive defense, counterforce, and measures to counter paramilitary, covert, and terrorist threats. For more details see Secretary of Defense's Annual Report to the President and the Congress and the Defense Department's Proliferation: Threat and Response, cited in Peter Hays et al., "Countering the Proliferation and Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction" – ed. Peter L. Hays et al., *Countering the Proliferation and Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction*, p. 11.

¹⁶⁸ CTR is a program based on the financial involvement of the international community... For more details, see Peter Hays et al., "Countering the Proliferation and Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction" – ed. Peter L. Hays et al., *Countering the Proliferation and Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction*, pp. 12-13.

¹⁶⁹ DCI - the protection plans were designed to detect, track, identify, intercept, destroy, neutralize NBC warheads, avoid contamination, protect forces, and decontaminate, attack operations. For more details, see Peter Hays et al., "Countering the Proliferation and Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction" – ed. Peter L. Hays et al., *Countering the Proliferation and Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction*, pp. 14-15.

¹⁷⁰ Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, p. 430.

Chinese perceptions of such developments led President Clinton to impose stabilizing conditions for progress: technological viability, a persuasive threat analysis, economic feasibility, and compliance with arms control and allied considerations. In 1997, the PDD-60 declared the possible use of nuclear weapons in case of chemical or biological attack. However, the persisting Russian hostility to amending the 1972 ABM Treaty resulted in the Clinton administration's decision to postpone firm commitment to deployment of NMD until the summer of 2000,¹⁷¹ when it was deferred to the next administration. The issue was settled by President George W. Bush, whom, on 13 December 2001, gave Russia notice of the U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty, in order to begin preparations for a limited National Missile Defense. Although the decision was highly controversial, the administration argued for the need to protect the United States from nuclear blackmail by rogue states. The decision was favored by the new Bush administration worldview and strategic re-assessment.

3. The Dawn of a New American Foreign Policy: George W. Bush Administration (2000-)

Essentially, the President George W. Bush's electoral campaign announced his determination to overcome the legacy of the Cold War and achieve adjustment to the new security environment, especially in light of more positive relations with Russia. However, at the outset of his presidency, the longstanding predominant distress about ascendant China and Russia was still primary concern of the security assessment.

The landmark issue of the new administration was the growing concern with America's own extensive ambitions and commitments to maintain regional and global order.¹⁷² It was stressed that the discontented smaller powers might use nuclear threats to coerce the United States to either discontinue ongoing interference, or undermine its will for future endeavors.¹⁷³ Even though non-state actors were mentioned as potential source of threat, the pattern of thinking was still very much focused on states. Hence, the propensity to break with the past was initially focused mainly on overcoming the Mutual

¹⁷¹ Sam Sarkesian et al., *U.S. National Security – Policymakers, Processes, and Politics*, p. 289.

¹⁷² Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, pp. 410-411.

¹⁷³ Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, p. 411.

Assured Destruction strategies and promoting NMD. Nonetheless, the terrorist attacks of September 2001 radically transformed the perception of source of threat, at the same time generating an intense sense of vulnerability among the American public.

A resilient determination to assume a more assertive stance on the international relations arena resulted in an enhanced interest in counter-proliferation strategies. In the new circumstances, previous concerns harbored by Clinton administration with regards to the perceived association of counterproliferation with preemptive action were outdated by what the new administration called an urgency to tackle more firmly the threat posed by rogue states, non-state actors and terrorism.

The shift in the U.S. foreign policy's focus was announced publicly, by President Bush, on 20 September 2001 in an "Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People."¹⁷⁴ The address declared in effect "War on Terrorism" as the chief American priority. Subsequent public statements of the Bush administration officials as well as official documents offered guidelines for implementation.

As a result, in the context of the new security assessment, *the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review* and the January 2002 Nuclear Posture Review made recommendations for the transformation of the US military strategy, planning and force structure. The analysis identified a fluid and dynamic security environment. A wide spectrum of contingencies were foreseen, related to uncertain identity and number of potential opponents as sources of possible conflict, as well as type of attack. Both documents advanced four key elements as pillars for the emergent security strategy: assuring allies, dissuading potential enemies, deterring threats and countering coercion against the U.S., and defeating adversaries.¹⁷⁵ Additionally, there was a strong recommendation to shift the U.S. deterrence strategy from the threat by punishment to threat by denial. On this background, the development of counterforce capabilities and missile defenses were seen as top priorities.

¹⁷⁴ George W. Bush, Biography - Foreign policy and security, Wikipedia, (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_W._Bush - consulted on 10 April 2004)

¹⁷⁵ A Report of the Center for Counterproliferation Research, "The Counterproliferation Imperative – Meeting Tomorrow's Challenges," Washington, D.C., NDU, November 2001, p. 14.

At planning level, this entailed a shift from the traditional threat-based nuclear planning to a capabilities-based approach,¹⁷⁶ prescribing a wider range of capabilities. The resulting flexibility would enable the U.S. military to cope with unpredictable range and types of opponents and contingencies.

By and large, albeit reduced, the Cold War nuclear triad was maintained as a foundation for the New Triad, which included both non-nuclear and nuclear capabilities. The nuclear forces would continue to play an essential role in supporting U.S. commitments, dissuading arms competition and deterring hostile opponents. However, the novelty of the New Triad was the augmentation of the nuclear weapons with active and passive defensive systems.¹⁷⁷ That is to say that the New Triad comprises two categories of nuclear forces: the operationally deployed forces for immediate or unexpected contingencies, and the responsive forces for potential contingencies. The latter enhanced the former through the capability for force reconstitution.¹⁷⁸

The non-nuclear weapons and defense capabilities were providing a break away from outdated Mutual Assured Destruction, enhancing the credibility of the US deterrence posture. While the active defense capabilities would provide protection in case of failed deterrence, the non-nuclear capabilities would further reduce the dependency of the offensive component on nuclear forces. A high-quality command control, intelligence and adaptive planning was envisaged to enhance overall effectiveness.¹⁷⁹

According to Undersecretary of Defense Douglas J. Feith, the new approach intended to integrate nuclear forces with other military capabilities, rather than isolating them, to achieve a synergy between all defense components. By supplementing their use

¹⁷⁶ J. D. Crouch, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy, Special Briefing on the Nuclear Posture Review, US DOD, 9 January 2002 (http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2002/t01092002_t0109npr.html, as consulted on 28 April 2004)

¹⁷⁷ The New Triad was augmented through a “broad array of nuclear, non-nuclear and defensive capabilities,” in the Statement of the Honorable Douglas J. Feith, Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, Senate Armed Services Hearing on the Nuclear Posture Review, 14 February 2002

¹⁷⁸ The capability for force reconstitution offers on one hand ability to load additional warheads on bombers and ballistic missiles, while it allows for significant reduction in the number of operationally deployed nuclear forces.

¹⁷⁹ J.D. Crouch, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy, Special Briefing on the Nuclear Posture Review, (http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/2002/t01092002_t0109npr.html, as consulted on 28 April 2004)

with non-nuclear strike capabilities or defensive systems, the nuclear weapons were linked to multiple defense policy goals. Reduced reliance of the strategic planning on offensive systems allowed the necessary flexibility for defense adaptive planning in unexpected situations, thus facilitating real-time response to changes in the strategic environment.

Other defense goals were approached as well by the NPR: allies would be assured through substantial reductions of nuclear capabilities and credible non-nuclear and nuclear response options to support U.S. commitments. As concerns with the threat posed by terrorists and rogue states armed with WMD were particularly emphasized, states like North Korea, Iraq, Iran, Syria and Libya were singled out as possible contingencies. Furthermore, the possibility of use of nuclear weapons in such contingencies was mentioned. In addition, China and Russia still appeared on the list of security concerns.¹⁸⁰ The underlining reason for the proposed shift was rooted in the utter unpredictability of the new security environment, and a greater expectation of failed deterrence.

4. Bush Doctrine of Preemption

The 2002 U.S. National Security Strategy took the NPR's recommendations further, emphasizing an explicit shift in emphasis placed on components of pre-existent strategies, thus marking a fundamental transformation in the American foreign policy.

The proactive counter-proliferation military strategies gained primacy in the new policy approach, downgrading the previous focus on diplomatic dissuasion through traditional non-proliferation measures.¹⁸¹ The new strategy announced the elevation of "anticipatory action to defeat imminent threat" at the level of primary policy, justified by the determination to "forestall or prevent hostile acts by ... adversary."¹⁸² The document emphasized the risks posed by inaction in dealing with fused threats of rogue states, terrorism, diffused technology, and the increasing willingness of the adversaries to use

¹⁸⁰ Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, pp. 433-434.

¹⁸¹ Jason D. Ellis, "The Best Defense: Counterproliferation and U.S. National Security," *The Washington Quarterly*, Spring 2003, p. 116.

¹⁸² US National Security Strategy 2002, (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html>), consulted on 11 January 2004), pp. 13-15.

WMD.¹⁸³ The argument made was that the advance of technology alters the real-time actions to defend against threats. Thus, while traditional diplomatic undertakings¹⁸⁴ were still considered useful, the document pointed to their limitations, confirmed by the reality of proliferation.

Moreover, consideration of the improved ability of the adversaries to deceive threat assessment, through access to dual-use technologies, and rapid pace of technological progress, resulted in anxiety about surprise attacks. Consequently, relaxation of the conventional understanding of the concept of “imminent threat” was advocated, as well as more offensive approaches to prevent future attacks.¹⁸⁵ For this purpose, while the U.S. would uphold its ability to deter by threat of overwhelming destruction, the new strategies were designed to include a wide spectrum of responses to allow tailoring appropriate responses according to particular situations.¹⁸⁶

Furthermore, the initial intention of the Republican Party to withdraw from the ABM Treaty, was bolstered by the U.S. led campaign against terrorism.¹⁸⁷ Thus, although the attack on 11 September 2001 undermined the rationale for missile defence in dealing with terrorist attacks, the anxiety about homeland vulnerability prevailed, resulting in the December 2002 announcement to launch a limited National Missile Defense system by 2004.¹⁸⁸ From the new deterrent posture perspective, the withdrawal from the ABM Treaty was seen as just one of the necessary measures contributing to fostering credibility and assuring protection.¹⁸⁹

A series of official strategies were designed to detail the overarching worldview embedded in the U.S. National Security Strategy, offering more specific guidance – i.e., July 2002 National Strategy for Homeland Security, December 2002 National Strategy to

¹⁸³ Jason D. Ellis, “The Best Defense: Counterproliferation and U.S. National Security,” p. 117.

¹⁸⁴ Diplomatic efforts for nonproliferation are treaties, regimes and cooperative threat reduction.

¹⁸⁵ Jason D. Ellis, “The Best Defense: Counterproliferation and U.S. National Security,” pp. 126-128.

¹⁸⁶ Jason D. Ellis, “The Best Defense: Counterproliferation and U.S. National Security,” p. 129.

¹⁸⁷ Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, p. 431.

¹⁸⁸ Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, p. 431.

¹⁸⁹ Jason D. Ellis, “The Best Defense: Counterproliferation and U.S. National Security,” p. 129.

Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction, and February 2003 National Strategy for Combating Terrorism. By and large, all documents were part of an effort to design a comprehensive strategy to tackle the new threats of rogue states, terrorism and WMD.

This chapter portrayed the evolution of the U.S. military strategy in the post-Cold War era. The analysis illustrates major trends in the American national security policy and the causal explanation that favored those specific preferences. This offers indications with regards to the process of adaptation of the American view on the use of force to the new security environment. It illustrates the elements of continuity, as well as the transformation of the American perceptions and predominant strategic preferences of behavior to cope with the perceived threat. Ultimately, the line of reasoning provided by the current administration in justifying the policy transformations adopted, including the Bush doctrine of preemption, are depicted.

The next chapter will conclude by examining the significance of the Bush doctrine of preemption from the different perspectives offered by previous chapters. In other words, the analysis will consider particularities of the American strategic culture and practice, as well as international law provisions. The aim is to determine the prospects of durability of the current trend in the American strategic policy.

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V. CONCLUSIONS

A. THE 2002 U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY IN LIGHT OF THE INTERNATIONAL LAW

1. The 2002 U.S. National Security Strategy: Preemption or Prevention?

The policy articulated in the 2002 U.S. National Security Strategy set in motion a great controversy among international law experts. By elevating the preemption doctrine to the status of a primary policy, the Bush doctrine was considered to reflect an expansive view of rights under the law on the recourse to force, or *jus ad bellum*. Overall, the end result foreseen was one of destabilizing the international system.¹⁹⁰

Many observers at home and abroad were alarmed by the U.S. government's decision to redefine the concept of the imminence of a threat. The proposal to alter one of the fundamental criteria for preemptive action under customary international law without specifying the particular circumstances that would legitimate preemptive action was perceived by allies as hazardous. Their concerns were captured by Pierre Hassner: "to generalize ... a doctrine centered around the idea of launching a unilateral first strike against any state that possesses or builds weapons of mass destruction ... means creating a situation of permanent or open-ended exception and insecurity."¹⁹¹

Moreover, critics questioned the confusing and inexact use of the two distinct notions of preemption and prevention in the U.S. documents. It was noted that in the context of the declared U.S. goal of maintaining predominance, the call for preemptive war bore a strong resemblance to the pursuit of preventive war along offensive realist lines. To be precise, the 2002 U.S. National Security Strategy's endorsement of preemptive action as a means to "prevent ... enemies from threatening" the United States and its allies was seen as taking the already contentious discussion of anticipatory self-

¹⁹⁰ Steven R. Ratner, "Jus ad Bellum and Jus in Bello after September 11," *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 96, No. 4, October 2002, p. 913.

¹⁹¹ Pierre Hassner, "Definitions, Doctrines and Divergences," *The National Interest*, No. 69, Fall 2002, p. 32.

defense “a step further into the realm of subjectivity.”¹⁹² In essence, the American administration’s willingness to use force in order to prevent threats from emerging repositioned the discussion in the realm of prevention.¹⁹³

In this respect, some European observers argued that the new conceptual framework seemed to derive from earlier centuries’ focus on international politics as great-power rivalry.¹⁹⁴ Although the American determination to tackle challenges of the new security environment, as illustrated by the broad international support for the U.S.-led intervention in Afghanistan, the new, aggressive tendency was seen as endangering achievements in international law. Thus, the lack of clearly defined standards for operations under the new preemption doctrine generated unease among American and foreign critics. They argued that official documents have to be carefully worded to avoid destabilizing effects.¹⁹⁵

In addition, this anxiety was enhanced by President Bush declaration that the U.S. “will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those [states] who harbor them.”¹⁹⁶ This statement failed to adhere to the customary international law of state responsibility,¹⁹⁷ which holds that states should not be held accountable for the actions of non-state actors on their territory unless:

the person or group of persons is in fact acting on the instructions of, or
under the direction or control of, that State in carrying out the conduct, ...
if the person or group of persons is in fact exercising elements of the

¹⁹² Miriam Sapiro, “Iraq: The Shifting Sands of Preemptive Self-Defense,” *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 97, No 3, July 2003, p. 599.

¹⁹³ 2002 *US National Security Doctrine? Strategy*, V. Prevent our Enemies from Threatening Us, Our Allies, and our Friends with Weapons of Mass Destruction, p. 13.

¹⁹⁴ Lawrence Freedman, “Prevention, Not Preemption,” *The Washington Quarterly*, Spring 2003, p. 114.

¹⁹⁵ Francois Heisbourg, “Is Preemption Necessary?,” *The Washington Quarterly*, Spring 2003, Vol. 26, No. 2, p.75.

¹⁹⁶ President George W. Bush, “Address to the Nation on the Terrorist Attacks,” 11 September 2001, Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, Vol. 37, 17 September 2001, p. 1301

¹⁹⁷ The general consensus on the issue of state responsibility was expressed by the International Law Commission in 2001, which endorsed the General Assembly’s 1974 Definition of Aggression and the ruling of the International Court of Justice in *Nicaragua v. United States*. For more details see Steven R. Ratner, “Jus ad Bellum and Jus in Bello after September 11,” *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 96, No. 4, October 2002, p. 908.

governmental authority in the absence or default of the official authorities, [and] ... if and to the extent that the State acknowledges and adopts the conduct in question as its own.¹⁹⁸

It follows that the American decision to treat equally non-state actors and the states harboring them stirred concern about the danger of blurring the distinction between states and non-state actors. Although in the 1990's, the range of justifications for intervention broadened significantly, state sovereignty remains an important factor in preserving international stability. Thus, action taken under the new U.S. policy, especially in the absence of compelling evidence, was considered to generate severe consequences for the stability of the international system.

Finally, the United States government promoted regime change as a method to achieve non-proliferation ends. This approach was inconsistent with respect to state sovereignty, a primordial right under the UN Charter as well as the central stabilizing rule in international politics.

Despite the Bush administration's criticism of the UNSC's rigidity and irrelevance, the members of the international community displayed willingness to adapt international law provisions to current threats. This was illustrated by the UN and NATO members' supportive attitude in the immediate aftermath of the September 2001 attacks on the United States. To be exact, the very next day the UN issued a resolution condemning the attacks and recognizing the inherent right of the United States to individual and collective self-defense. The resolution stated that the United Nations "regards such acts, like any act of international terrorism, as a threat to international peace and security" and expressed "readiness to take all necessary steps to respond."¹⁹⁹ Concurrently, NATO's North Atlantic Council invoked Article V for the first time in its

¹⁹⁸ "Draft Articles on Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts," in *Report of the International Law Commission on the Work of Its Fifty-third Session*, UN GAOR, 56th Sess., Supp. No. 10, at 43, 337 Arts. 8-9 11, UN Doc. A/56/10 (2001), quoted in Steven R. Ratner, "Jus ad Bellum and Jus in Bello after September 11," *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 96, No. 4, October 2002, p. 908.

¹⁹⁹ UN Security Council Resolution 1368 of 12 September 2001.

history, embodying the members' "commitment to collective self-defense."²⁰⁰ Similarly, numerous other governments around the world expressed solidarity with the United States.

Furthermore, UNSC resolution 1373 followed later the same month, requesting states to undertake specific measures to bring the problem of terrorism under control.²⁰¹ The foundation for this latter action rested on a previous UNSC resolution – i.e., 1189 issued on 13 August 1998 – which stressed:

every Member State has the duty to refrain from organizing, instigating, assisting or participating in terrorist acts in another State or acquiescing in organized activities within its territory directed towards the commission of such acts.²⁰²

Nonetheless, in spite of the UN members' determination to tackle the challenge of terrorism the subsequent American claims of preemptive action in Iraq illustrated the limit of UN members' willingness to infringe upon long-standing norms of behavior in the absence of compelling evidence.²⁰³

2. The 2003 US-Led Intervention in Iraq

The clash between the Bush administration's view and the traditional standards established by international law occurred during the debate preceding the U.S.-led military action in Iraq.

In brief, building on the provisions of the 2002 U.S. National Security Strategy, the American administration proposed military intervention in Iraq and regime change. U.S. officials based their arguments for what they termed "preemptive" action against Iraq on its noncompliance with numerous UNSC resolutions through its supposed acquisition of WMD. In addition, the administration invoked Saddam Hussein's alleged connection with the Al Qaeda terrorist organization. Hence, in light of the declared war

²⁰⁰ Statement by NAC, 12 September 2001 (<http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2001/p01-124e.htm>, consulted on 15 May 2004)

²⁰¹ UN Security Council Resolution 1373 of 28 September 2001.

²⁰² UN Security Council Resolution 1189 of 13 August 1998.

²⁰³ Lawrence Freedman, "Prevention, Not Preemption," *The Washington Quarterly*, Spring 2003. p. 114.

on terrorism and states that harbor terrorist organizations and in view of the threat that Saddam Hussein's possession of WMD posed to the United States, the Bush administration declared that anticipatory self-defense was justified.

The UNSC responded to the proposed U.S.-led intervention by adopting resolution 1441, issued on 7 November 2002, which found Iraq in material breach of previous resolutions. It established a new inspection regime and warned against serious consequences in case of Iraq's failure to cooperate. However, the resolution did not explicitly authorize military intervention in Iraq. The Resolution declared that the Security Council:

Decides that Iraq has been and remains in material breach of its obligations under relevant resolutions, including resolution 687 (1991), in particular through Iraq's failure to cooperate with United Nations inspectors and the IAEA, and to complete the actions required under paragraphs 8 to 13 of resolution 687 (1991) ...

... decides to set up an enhanced inspection regime with the aim of bringing to full and verified completion the disarmament process established by resolution 687 (1991) and subsequent resolutions of the Council;²⁰⁴

Moreover, numerous UN members contested the subsequent attempt of Secretary Powell to make the case for military action. First, the evidence presented with regard to a connection between the Iraqi government and Al Qaeda organization was widely considered unpersuasive, or at any rate not convincing enough to justify a breach of Iraq's sovereignty. Second, the inspection reports did not indicate any conclusive information regarding Iraq's possession of WMD. Therefore, France, Germany, and Russia proposed more time for inspections. They argued that the requirement of an imminent threat as a criterion for preemption was not met in Iraq's case. Therefore, in their view, obtaining undeniable proof to support the American claim and exhausting peaceful efforts were viewed as critical for the legitimacy of a military intervention.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁴ UNSC Resolution 1441 (2002), Adopted by the Security Council at its 4644th meeting, on 8 November 2002, p. 3.

²⁰⁵ Miriam Sapiro, "Iraq: The Shifting Sands of Preemptive Self-Defense," p. 603.

When U.S. officials declared that an intervention in Iraq would aim, along with addressing non-proliferation, at regime change, China, France, and Russia revealed their decision to veto any resolution authorizing the use of force against Iraq.²⁰⁶ As a result, in March 2003 Washington and London announced that the U.S.-led intervention in Iraq would be launched relying on the legal basis offered by UNSC resolutions 678, 687 and 1441. They argued that, based on Iraq's violation of the terms of ceasefire, past resolutions provided a continuing or resumed authority to use force.²⁰⁷

As expected, an intense debate followed regarding the validity and legitimacy of such an undertaking. The claim of continuing authority to use force under a UNSC resolution has been challenged on the grounds that the previous resolutions referred to specific situations – e.g., Resolution 678 referred to a collective action, including the government of Kuwait. Moreover, the public announcement by three permanent members of the Security Council of their intention to veto any resolution explicitly authorizing the prospective action substantiated a perspective at odds with the U.S. position. Therefore in spite of the British and American assertion of resumed authority, the 2003 military intervention in Iraq lacked wide international support and amounted to “a war of choice,” as Adam Roberts, among others, has termed it.²⁰⁸

Overall, the American assertions about the urgency of preemptive action in Iraq were perceived as the fulfillment of the European allies' anxieties initially stirred by the U.S. National Security Strategy's unilateral stance. Many observers held that the evidence of Iraq's possession of WMD and Saddam Hussein's connection with Al Qaeda was feeble and that it did not reasonably meet the criterion of imminence of threat for a legally justifiable preemptive use of force. Furthermore, human rights violations were a chronic issue in Iraq and by no means more acute at the time of proposed military action than at other moments in recent history. It follows that the credibility of the pressing humanitarian justification for the intervention was doubtful.

²⁰⁶ Michael J. Glennon, “Why the Security Council Failed, *Foreign Affairs*,” May/June 2003, p. 2.

²⁰⁷ Adam Roberts, “Law and the Use of Force After Iraq,” *Survival*, Vol. 45, No. 2, Summer 2003, p. 40.

²⁰⁸ Adam Roberts, “Law and the Use of Force After Iraq,” p. 45.

Thus, some UN members displayed reluctance to set a precedent for behavior that violates the UN Charter. This indicated a limit of international tolerance for radical transformations of the norms of sovereignty and non-intervention. They argued that the UN Charter was intended to offer flexibility in tackling cases dependent on a particular context. However, the expansion of rationales to an open-ended situation has been strongly contested. Adopting a highly generalized doctrine which would infringe the norms regarded as cornerstones of international law and international stability – i.e., sovereignty, state responsibility and non-intervention was perceived dangerous and prompted stiff resistance to the American proposals.²⁰⁹

Although customary international law has been invoked as a legal base for a relaxed understanding of preemption, it was the possibility of setting a precedent for future behavior that particularly prompted some UN members to deny the existence of a consensus on an ambiguous situation. The military intervention in Iraq was considered to lean too much toward prevention, even if the American administration termed it preemption. Therefore, the UNSC members considered that endorsement of an action without firm roots in international law would amount to a self-fulfilling prophecy of increased proliferation and terrorism as well as the increased reliance on the justification of anticipatory self-defense by an ever-growing number of states bent on intervention.²¹⁰

The desire for added precision was boosted by the lack of focus in the American justifications. This lack of specificity was seen as stimulating suspicion and animosity, especially in the Muslim world. Alternating between enforcement of the UNSC resolutions, anticipatory self-defense, prevention, regime change for non-proliferation, and for humanitarian reasons, the American proposal generated confusion with regards to the real purpose of the military action.²¹¹ Moreover, by linking the preemption doctrine with regime change and the war on terrorism, the Bush administration presented the international community with a “single package,” forcing them into an extreme decision with little room for consultation.

²⁰⁹ Steven R. Ratner, “Jus ad Bellum and Jus in Bello after September 11,” p. 920.

²¹⁰ Miriam Sapiro, “Iraq: The Shifting Sands of Preemptive Self-Defense,” p. 605.

²¹¹ Adam Roberts, “Law and the Use of Force After Iraq,” p. 39.

In this context, the failure of the American officials to take into consideration the other states' concerns and constraints undermined the chances for cooperation.²¹² The unilaterally imposed timeline, which left no room for the alignment of the other states' policies, made it easy to depict the American administration as eager to disengage from the norms and regulations of established over a half of a century of institution building.²¹³ Furthermore, the U.S. attitude of open defiance of the Charter system and the material steps taken to act unilaterally even before initiating negotiations for multilateral action generated resentment and undermined the likelihood of reaching a consensus.²¹⁴

The condescending tone of the American proposal to act against Iraq, as well as the U.S. Congress' authorization for use of force against Iraq without UN approval, enhanced international concerns about the unilateral stance of the new American foreign policy. The new American policy towards Iraq was interpreted as the materialization of the worst anxieties stirred by the 2002 U.S. National Security Strategy.

B. THE BUSH DOCTRINE IN LIGHT OF THE U.S. STRATEGIC CULTURE

1. Competing Worldviews

Nonetheless, although the Bush administration's foreign policy was perceived as being an unexpected and impulsive break with the traditional American strategic culture and international norms of the use of force, this approach has been advocated systematically in the United States after the end of the Cold War.

At the end of the Cold War, confronted with the task of redesigning the world order and amending its national policies, the American policymaking community was divided about the manner in which to pursue national interests more effectively. The divide can be traced back to the end of World War II when the American elites were facing similar circumstances and challenges regarding the nature of the international order. In many respects the post-Cold-War debate resembled the deliberations of more than half of century ago about American foreign policy.²¹⁵

²¹² Adam Roberts, "Law and the Use of Force After Iraq," p. 51.

²¹³ Francois Heisbourg, "Is Preemption Necessary?," p.75.

²¹⁴ Tom J. Farer, "The Prospect for International Law and Order in the Wake of Iraq," *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 97, No. 3, July 2003, p. 626.

²¹⁵ John Ruggie, *Winning the Peace*, NY, Columbia University Press, 1996, pp. 2-3.

By and large, at the end of the Cold War the majority of American political leaders associated themselves with the internationalist creed. However, by the mid-1990's a new group of isolationists gained prominence. Advanced by the conservative wing of the Republican Party, the isolationist view advocated a modest international position of the U.S. They recommend abandonment of its dominant role in international relations and supported the prospect of a multipolar world. Their goal was to free the United States of the burden of leadership. However like their precursors at the end of the World War II, the isolationists' view of foreign policy was refuted by the realities of globalization and interdependence.²¹⁶

Thus having yet again defeated isolationism, internationalist views prevailed in the United States at the end of the Cold War. Nonetheless, the internationalists were divided in various competing forms, according to other influences – i.e., idealism, pacifism, realism, etc. Overall, two groups within the internationalist camp gained predominant influence: multilateralists and unilateralists. The key difference between them was their policy preference for creating international order. The multilateralists advocated institutionalized commitments along communitarian organizing principles. Conversely, the unilateralists were characterized by aversion to weakened sovereignty through international institutions. They rejected constraints placed by international commitments on American power, campaigning for an assertive stance in pursuing national interests.²¹⁷

Advocating a collective security approach as a system-management mechanism, the multilateralists viewed the end of the Cold War as an opportunity to empower the UN to function as initially envisaged.²¹⁸ They placed great emphasis on consultation and cooperation as a means to share the burden of coping with the ramifications of globalization and economic interdependence. They stressed the nature of the American style of power management as a determining factor in enabling successful, cost-effective leadership. Reassuring and persuading partners to follow, they deemed, best served U.S. long-term interests by reducing the cost of world-management through burden-sharing.

²¹⁶ Amos A. Jordan et al., *American National Security*, p. 280.

²¹⁷ John Ruggie, *Winning the Peace*, p. 4.

²¹⁸ Amos A. Jordan et al., *American National Security*, p. 280.

Alternatively, the unilateralists focused on the U.S.' position as a sole superpower, favoring preventive action for its preservation. This was virtually a revival of similar views that flourished in the late-1940's when anxieties about the loss of atomic monopoly prompted consideration of preventive nuclear war to maintain the Western position of "nuclear attack-defense superiority."²¹⁹ It was a worldview rooted in the realist paradigm, aiming to maximize America's freedom to act and to use its strength to preserve its position in the system.²²⁰ It defined the national interest narrowly and emphasized the immediate practical efficacy in the foreign policy.²²¹

2. The Bush Doctrine – A Revolution in the American Strategic Policy?

The unilateral trend in American foreign policy surfaced during the first Bush administration (January 1989 - January 1992). The draft of the 1992 U.S. Defense Planning Guidance stands as evidence of the emergence of this pattern of thinking. Conceived under Paul Wolfowitz's supervision, the document argued for preservation of U.S. worldwide predominance: "our number one mission in the world, now that we are the sole superpower, is to make sure we stay that way."²²² These right wing conservatives advocated that American foreign policy focus on "precluding the emergence of any potential future global competitor."²²³ Informed by a Hobessian view of the world, they described the world as a dangerous place despite the end of the Cold War. Russia's recovery was still viewed as possible, while the potential rise of Germany, Japan and China as challenging military powers was considered threatening.

Furthermore, the document proposed intervention in Iraq, arguing that the First Gulf War ended prematurely.²²⁴ In an effort to cope with the new security challenges, their prescription was an "assertive, often unilateralist approach to world affairs."²²⁵

²¹⁹ Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, p. 118.

²²⁰ Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *America Unbound*, p. 13.

²²¹ John Ruggie, *Winning the Peace*, p. 3.

²²² Barton Gellman, reporter for The Washington Post he was given a leaked a draft of the Defense Department's 1992 Defense Planning Guidance), in an interview with FRONTLINE. (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/iraq/interviews/gellman.html>, consulted on 30 April 2003); the original text of the document at: http://www.disinfopedia.org/wiki.phtml?title=Defense_Policy_Guidance_1992-1994, consulted on 3 June 2004.

²²³ Amos A. Jordan et al., *American National Security*, p. 545.

²²⁴ In 1992, Mr. Paul Wolfowitz was the U.S. Under-Secretary of Defense.

Nonetheless, the first two post-Cold War U.S. administrations came into office with multilateralist views of the world, tinged with Wilsonian rhetoric and aspirations. As a result, throughout the first decade after the end of the Cold War, the American decision-making community constantly rejected unilateralist recommendations.

The first Bush administration emphasized cooperative deterrence and joint action as the primary features of the new world order. Subsequently, from 1992-1999 President Clinton followed a similar path, aiming to consolidate international peace and stability through the spread of free-markets and democracy.²²⁶ The Clinton grand strategy of engagement and enlargement essentially projected a liberal international order, where non-proliferation was pursued through the spread of democracy, security assurance and integration into the globalized economy.²²⁷

Although its recommendations were rejected, the unilateralist trend endured, with its proponents making continuous efforts to influence American policy. Their first significant success occurred in 1994, when at the urging of the Congressional Republicans, the Republican Party adopted a common platform, entitled “The Contract with America.”²²⁸ In essence, it renounced America’s international commitments and criticized the Clinton administration for “subordinating US interests in favor of ill-defined goals and policies established by international civil servants and foreign nations.”²²⁹

Subsequent efforts to advance the argument of preemptive action resulted in a 1998 public letter addressed to President Clinton, and a 2000 report “Rebuilding America’s Defenses.” Both documents advocated a more assertive U.S. foreign policy with specific emphasis on the Middle East, notably advocating regime change in Iraq.²³⁰

²²⁵ Amos A. Jordan et al., *American National Security*, p. 279.

²²⁶ John Ruggie, *Winning the Peace*, p. 2.

²²⁷ Robert S Litwak, “Non-proliferation and the Dilemmas of Regime Change,” *Survival*, Vol. 45, No. 4, Winter 2003-2004, p. 12.

²²⁸ John Ruggie, *Winning the Peace*, p. 7.

²²⁹ John Ruggie, *Winning the Peace*, p. 7.

²³⁰ “Origins of Regime Change in Iraq,” *Proliferation Brief*, Vol. 6, no 5, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (www.ceip.org/filesnonprolif/templates/Publications.asp?p=8&PublicationsID=1214), as consulted on 5 May 2004), p. 1.

Eventually, the unilateralist agenda did influence to some extent the Clinton administration's foreign policy. First, after the U.S. suffered casualties in Somalia, unilateralists succeed in limiting the UN missions in which American troops were involved. Next, in 1998 the Iraq Liberation Act declared the U.S. Congress' support for a new U.S. policy to secure the removal of Saddam Hussein's regime. Likewise, the proponents of unilateralist proposals inspired the efforts made by the Clinton administration to develop a National Missile Defense, a promise made by the Republicans in their "Contract with America."²³¹

However, by and large the unilateralist drive had been unsuccessful in transforming the mainstream policy prior to the terrorist attacks of September 2001. The Clinton administration succeeded in preserving a multilateral stance in American security policy, and through consultation, reassurance and accommodation promoted a cautious transformation with the allies' acquiescence. The ultimate watered-down form of these policies reflected the careful balance of the unilateralist view with the Administration's multilateral efforts, and did much to alleviate possible controversies with traditional allies.

It was not until the current Bush administration took office that the unilateralists gained primacy within the security policymaking community. Profoundly skeptical of international organizations and ill at ease with constraints placed on America's freedom to act, the new Republican administration initially seemed to advance an isolationist approach. They advocated "humility in America's dealings overseas" and rejected democracy promotion and nation-building as irresponsible arrogance.²³² Nevertheless, following the September 2001 attacks on the United States, the American perception of its vulnerability generated favorable conditions for this unilateralist influence to flourish.

²³¹ The original text of the Iraq Liberation Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-338 – 31 October 1998) can be found at: <http://news.findlaw.com/hdocs/docs/iraq/libact103198.pdf>, consulted 7 June 2004. For more details, see Report for Congress, "Iraq: U.S. Efforts to Change the Regime," Order Code RL 31339, Updated October 3, 2002, Kenneth Katzman, Specialist in Middle Eastern Katzman, Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division, Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress.

²³² Antony J. Blinken, "From Preemption to Engagement," *Survival*, Vol. 45, No. 4, Winter 2003-2004, p. 33.

Furthermore, the fact that the same representatives who supported the 1992 U.S. Defense Planning Guidance once again held high official positions in the new Administration empowered them to influence the debate within governmental circles.

Thus the Bush administration adopted a more assertive stance, shifting the emphasis toward a unilateralist approach.²³³ Numerous decisions confirm the new orientation of the new American stance: the decision to remove the U.S. executive's approval from the Kyoto Protocol, tariffs imposed on imported steel, the refusal to sign onto the international mine ban treaty, the withdrawal from the ABM Treaty, and the decision to revoke the U.S. signature on the International Criminal Court treaty.

However, it was the transformation produced by the new Administration's security policy that stirred a vocal reaction from the international community. The resemblance of the 2002 U.S. National Security Strategy to the draft of the 1992 U.S. Defense Planning Guidance confirmed an unambiguous shift in the American security policy towards a unilateralist stance. Although sporadic efforts were made to create an international consensus, the new "a la carte multilateralism," as Richard Haass termed it, comprising ad-hoc "coalitions of the willing" as opposed to the traditional institutionalized alliances, was in fact founded on a strong unilateralist view.²³⁴ This initial anxiety was reinforced by the Administration's decision to elevate preemption to a primary policy option, its public determination to "act preventively against potential threats," and its willingness to pursue regime change through the use of force.²³⁵

Replicating the worldview advocated consistently by the unilateralists throughout the last decade, the new security policy is not a revolution *per se* in the goals traditionally promoted by the U.S. foreign policy. Nonetheless, it is a radical change in the means favored to pursue them.²³⁶

²³³ Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, p. 410.

²³⁴ Richard Haass (advisor to the U.S. Secretary of State Collin Powell), cited in Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *America Unbound*, p. 14.

²³⁵ Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *America Unbound*, p. 14.

²³⁶ Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *America Unbound*, p. 40.

Indeed, most of the policies adopted by the new administration were, in essence, a continuation of the Clinton administration's initiatives. As illustrated earlier, the National Missile Defense, the counter-proliferation strategies, and even the regime change policy were present in the Clinton administration.

Nevertheless, it is the overall unilateralist stance and willingness to use force, echoing the "hegemonist argument," that alarmed the international community.²³⁷ Despite similarities in objectives, the previous administration balanced these policies with a larger national strategy revolving around political transformation and nonproliferation efforts.²³⁸ The specificity of the new security environment was used as backdrop for defense planning transformation, but in such transformation, extensive cooperation with traditional alliances and the preservation of institutions was heavily promoted. Conversely, after the current Bush administration belatedly promoted counter-proliferation strategies to the core of American foreign policy, a sharp shift in emphasis towards military components of counter-proliferation strategies became apparent. The prominence of the newly upgraded proactive military undertakings, and the publicly announced determination to ignore others' opinions stirred an intense public debate among allies.²³⁹

3. The Bush Doctrine's Policy Implications

Many see the unilateralist guidance regarding military planning and particularly the utility of nuclear weapons as a self-fulfilling prophecy, generating a "bellicose global atmosphere" that will bring about the worst-case scenario envisaged by military planners.²⁴⁰

As illustrated in the previous chapters, the unilateralists recommend thorough planning for engaging in various contingencies as a critical ingredient for a credible deterrence policy – i.e., maximum deterrence.²⁴¹ Hence, in essence, the Bush doctrine

²³⁷ Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *America Unbound*, pp. 40-44.

²³⁸ Jason D. Ellis, "The Best Defense: Counterproliferation and U.S. National Security," p. 116.

²³⁹ Jason D. Ellis, "The Best Defense: Counterproliferation and U.S. National Security," p. 117.

²⁴⁰ Special Report, "The Shape of Things to Come: The Nuclear Posture Review, Missile Defense, and the Dangers of a New Arms Race," Western States Legal Foundation, April 2002, (<http://www.wslfweb.org/nukes/npr.htm>, as consulted on 30 April 2004), p. 11.

²⁴¹ Amos A. Jordan et al., *American National Security*, p. 279.

speaks to a remarkable endurance of earlier debates about the use of force in the nuclear era. Its rationale is rooted in the old “war-fighting” school of thought, which advanced flexible response, countervailing and prevailing strategies during the Cold War. As in previous circumstances when war-fighting capabilities were brought to the core of military planning, the Bush doctrine’s recommendations of military transformation are considered to promote an excessively offensive posture.²⁴²

Critics argue that, by integrating nuclear weapons with other military capabilities, the Bush Administration’s strategy blurs the boundary between nuclear and conventional weapons, legitimating the former as “instruments of state power.”²⁴³ The development of more accurate conventional weapons capable of accomplishing roles previously attributed to nuclear weapons further obscures the distinction between the two levels of violence. The consequence foreseen is the increased incentive for America’s enemies to acquire WMD in order to equal the U.S.’s advanced technology and as an insurance policy against American intervention.²⁴⁴

Additionally, although the Bush administration repeatedly announced cuts in strategic nuclear arms, the discrepancy between the number of dismantled warheads and those that become part of the active-reserve stockpile has stirred criticism from Russia.²⁴⁵ In this context, the lack of a formal, legally binding and verifiable agreement, as well as the great emphasis placed on the role of research and development, generates a U.S. ability to reconstitute its arsenal rapidly. The overall result has undermined efforts for genuine arms reductions and control in a broader venue. Moreover, critics argue that the U.S.’s strategic relationship with Russia and China is jeopardized by its multi-tiered

²⁴² For a detailed discussion see Chapter III of this thesis.

²⁴³ Special Report, “The Shape of Things to Come: The Nuclear Posture Review, Missile Defense, and the Dangers of a New Arms Race,” Western States Legal Foundation, April 2002, (<http://www.wslfweb.org/nukes/npr.htm>, as consulted on 30 April 2004), p. 11.

²⁴⁴ Special Report, The Shape of Things to Come: The Nuclear Posture Review, Missile Defense, and the Dangers of a New Arms Race, Western States Legal Foundation, April 2002 (<http://www.wslfweb.org/nukes/npr.htm>, as consulted on 30 April 2004), p. 7.

²⁴⁵ Michelle Ciarrocca, The Nuclear Posture Review: Reading Between the Lines, Common Dreams News Center, (<http://www.commondreams.org/cgi-bin/print.cgi?file=/views02/0117-10.htm>, consulted on 30 April 2004)

missile defense system and the increased precision of its offensive nuclear and conventional weapons.²⁴⁶ The predicted outcome of such actions is a global arms race, triggered by the unilateralist U.S. nuclear policy.²⁴⁷

As Frederick W. Kagan indicates, the emphasis placed by the Bush administration on military efficiency represents a trade-off to the detriment of the post-conflict objectives of nation-building for long-term national and regional stability. Designed around the concepts of the “Network-Centric Warfare” (NCW) and “shock and awe,” the new approach relies on information superiority to enable more effective neutralization and defeat of the enemy by destroying its “ability to command; to provide logistics; to organize society.” The deficiency of this approach is illustrated by the difficulties the U.S. has encountered in trying to stabilize and rebuild post-conflict Afghanistan and Iraq.²⁴⁸

American officials justify downgrading deterrence due to its inherently unpredictable character and partial utility, particularly in the new security setting. They argue that while improved intelligence information would provide a more accurate cost-benefit calculus, there is a limit to the ability to design an entirely reliable strategy. They claim that particular values, mode of thought, as well as the idiosyncratic leadership beliefs of the opponent are even more difficult to overcome when dealing with non-state actors. In their view the current security environment places even more strains on an already brittle deterrence, through the unpredictable outcome of the fusion of terrorism, rogue states and diffused technology. They recommend thorough preparations for failed deterrence due to the possession of WMD and long-range delivery capabilities by hostile regional powers and their willingness use them.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁶ Special Report, *The Shape of Things to Come: The Nuclear Posture Review, Missile Defense, and the Dangers of a New Arms Race*, (p. 15), Western States Legal Foundation, April 2002 (<http://www.wslfweb.org/nukes/npr.htm>, as consulted on 30 April 2004)

²⁴⁷ Michelle Ciarrocca, *The Nuclear Posture Review: Reading Between the Lines*, Common Dreams News Center, (<http://www.commondreams.org/cgi-bin/print.cgi?file=/views02/0117-10.htm>, as consulted on 30 April 2004)

²⁴⁸ For a detailed discussion of the “Network-Centric Warfare” and the “shock and awe” strategies see Frederick W. Kagan, *War and Aftermath*, Policy Review, No. 120, August 2003, pp. 5-19.

²⁴⁹ Keith B. Payne, “The Fallacies of Cold War Deterrence and a New Direction,” *Comparative Strategy*, 2003, pp. 422-423.

However, this argument is not new; it has been constantly used by the proponents of the war-fighting school of thought. The First Gulf War also showed that deterrence worked in Saddam Hussein's case. Furthermore, the definition of a successful deterrence strategy assumes a mélange of threat and reassurance. Therefore, critics stress the need for a balanced policy that includes a wide spectrum of mutually supporting cooperative and coercive responses. The long-term advantages of a security policy that exercises self-restraint include, they argue, reassurance of allies and a comprehensive, far-sighted strategy to present opponents "with a structured choice ... [instead of being] pushed into a choice."²⁵⁰

Furthermore, in analyzing the Bush administration's decision to pursue non-proliferation through the use of preemptive force and regime change, Robert S. Litwak calls attention to the need to tackle the initial motivations that prompted proliferation in order to achieve the long-term non-proliferation aim. He notes that the motivations for proliferation are highly context-dependent, springing from domestic and structural considerations. Thus, Litwak warns that regime change in itself is not sufficient to secure durable non-proliferation results. The critical indicator of proliferation is regime intentions, not regime type.²⁵¹ The Bush doctrine of preemption therefore is not only politically controversial due to the undermining effect on the international law, but also may well be highly ineffective in the long term.²⁵²

4. The Bush Doctrine's Prospects of Durability

Nonetheless, in spite of the controversy surrounding the Bush doctrine, the September 2001 attacks on the United States generated the necessary momentum to empower the hard-liners' approach within the American policymaking community. Although the current policy is highly contested, certain elements point to a possible future durability of the current trends in the American policy.²⁵³ Primary among them is the accuracy of the Strategy's description of the threats to U.S. interests. The international security environment has changed since the time when President Truman

²⁵⁰ Robert S Litwak, "Non-proliferation and the Dilemmas of Regime Change," p. 28.

²⁵¹ Robert S Litwak, "Non-proliferation and the Dilemmas of Regime Change," p. 27.

²⁵² Antony J. Blinken, "From Preemption to Engagement," p. 37.

²⁵³ Thomas Donnelly, "The Underpinnings of the Bush Doctrine," *National Security Outlook*, AEI Online, Washington, Publication date 1 February 2003.

characterized preemptive action as a weapon of fascist dictators. Secondly, the unprecedented degree of American power burdens the United States with responsibility for international stability, peace and order. These realities give a sense of legitimacy to the transformations adopted. Proponents of the current administration praise the new American security policy, arguing that the Bush doctrine is the most relevant revolution in security since the Truman administration. This revolution finally, in their view, brings U.S. security policy and U.S. power to a common denominator – in other words it shapes an assertive behavior, in harmony with its unrivaled power.

Such indications of the durability of the unilateralist trend in American security policy are of profound concern to the international community. While the historical record illustrates that the United States, as well as other countries, has acted unilaterally at times, those situations are expected to be exceptions to the general standard and not the norm in official policy. International concerns were heightened by the missionary vision of the Bush administration's policy, expressed in Secretary of State Colin Powell's presentation to Congress:

... our main purpose [is] to extend democracy, prosperity, and freedom to all the remaining dark corners of the world. Iraq is just a step in this process - a process that, as President Bush has said, will establish a balance of power that favors freedom across the globe.²⁵⁴

Regime change through military force appears now to be an overarching goal of the Bush administration's policy. By depicting Iraq as just one step of a broader scheme, the Bush administration has deepened anxieties about the American view of the use of force not only in the case of Iraq, but also with regards to any number of unforeseen events.

Despite arguments of a permanent shift in U.S. strategic culture, the analysis conducted in this thesis suggests that it is implausible that the Bush doctrine will long endure, given the prior defeats that similar unilateralist endeavors have suffered throughout the history of the United States.

²⁵⁴ Secretary Colin L. Powell, "The Administration's Position With Regard to Iraq," Testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Washington, DC, September 26, 2002 (www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2002/13757pf.htm, consulted February 2003)

Whereas the American political leadership succeeded for decades in synthesizing diverging interests and trends into a strategic culture that balanced multilateral and unilateral approaches to security, the current “revolution” in security affairs promotes a narrow strategic interest defined by an unsteady combination of offensive realism and Wilsonian idealism. Such an approach not only dismisses the U.S.’s long-standing commitment to the global interest that includes other members of the international community, but in doing so, fails to promote U.S. national values abroad.²⁵⁵ This will lead to short-term, issue-oriented alliances – or, in the words of the Administration, “the mission defines the coalition.” The end result is likely to be the United States’ isolation from the international community. However, while this was a feasible option half of century ago, in today’s era of globalization isolation is no longer an option.

Despite the fact that the current administration played up its attempts to bring about consensus with its new worldview, its “a la carte multilateralism” assumes a case-by-case approach, instead of presenting a long-term vision that would assure continuity and predictability. The consequence is that established standards of behavior are blurred, undermining stability in the international system. The drawback of such an approach is increased violence, leading to inevitable U.S. overstretch, and greater costs of unilateral system-management, particularly as weakened international institutions will be unable to facilitate burden-sharing.²⁵⁶

More importantly, the durability of President Truman’s “constitutional world order” was given by its resilience and thorough awareness of the structure of the international system, characterized by the antagonist relations with the Soviet Union.²⁵⁷ Conversely, the Bush administration’s security policy is uninformed by today’s realities, where the transnational character of the major challenges demands multilateral

²⁵⁵ Joseph S. Nye Jr., *The Paradox of American Power – Why the World’s Only Superpower Can’t Go It Alone*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 137-139.

²⁵⁶ Joseph S. Nye Jr., *The Paradox of American Power*, p. 159.

²⁵⁷ For a definition of the “constitutional world order” see G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory*, pp. 163-215.

cooperation. In an era of economic and information globalization most of the threats cannot be solved in isolation or through a unilateral approach, requiring broad and active cooperation.²⁵⁸

As illustrated in Chapter II the post-Cold War American foreign policy by and large followed the multilateral orientation established by the Truman administration, bridging diverging tendencies of unilateralism and isolationism under the umbrella of a multilateralist worldview. However, with the end of the Cold War the United States' position of the sole super-power liberated the unilateralist camp previous from strategic constraints. The advance of the unilateral argument was favored in part by the American public's lack of interest in international issues in the post Cold War era. The perceived lack of threat enhanced the isolationist tendency in the American strategic culture, opening up room for pressure placed by unilateral interest groups on the American international agenda. The cumulative effect was a unilateral approach in foreign affairs.²⁵⁹ Nonetheless, it is this author's conviction that all of the aforementioned factors are circumstantial and the likelihood of a lasting influence of the Bush doctrine of preemption is unrealistic.

In the immediate aftermath of the attack, the American response to the September 2001 terrorist attacks has been sanctioned by the American audience due to an overall perception of heightened vulnerability, which awakened specific features of the American way of war. The Wilsonian rhetoric adopted by American officials resembled to great extent the moralistic approach and crusading spirit specific to the American view of war portrayed in Chapter II of this thesis. President George W. Bush's famous 2002 State of the Union Address as well as other public statements, stand as evidence of the endurance of these features in the American strategic culture. As Lawrence Freedman noted, the tragic events brought to life the memory of Pearl Harbor. It stirred panic based on "long-established U.S. fears of surprise attacks in the form of a bolt from the skies... [which is a] product of geography and history."²⁶⁰ In addition, the predicament of planning a thorough defense in a nuclear era, detailed in Chapter III of this thesis, seems

²⁵⁸ Joseph S. Nye Jr., *The Paradox of American Power*, p. 163.

²⁵⁹ Joseph S. Nye Jr., *The Paradox of American Power*, pp. 133-135.

²⁶⁰ Lawrence Freedman, "Prevention, Not Preemption," p. 112.

to offer some justification for the Bush administration's argument. However, polls indicate that the American public displays a "strong preference for using military force under the auspices of the United Nations," as opposed to unilateral intervention.²⁶¹ The general unease with unilateralist behavior of the current administration has been illustrated by American public's reaction of to the UNSC members' decision to veto a resolution legitimating military intervention in Iraq. Hence, a long-term policy in unilateralist terms is unlikely to be perceived as legitimate by the American public in addition to being unsuited to the interdependent nature of the current international system.

Notwithstanding the circumstantial factors that generated it, the Bush doctrine ignores the lesson learned from previous decades that substantiated the shortsightedness and ineffectiveness of unbridled unilateralism and its emphasis on autonomy of action and ad-hoc management of problems. This is an insight which shaped the American strategic culture along the lines of multilateralism ever since President Truman. The subsequent administrations aimed at maintaining multilateral institutions that enshrined the United States' values. In doing so, they strived to serve the U.S. interests by socializing the other states, and provide incentives for them to follow its lead. This approach was seen as the best means to ensure continued hegemonic dominance as well as international stability in a cost-effective manner.

The achievements of the multilateral approach speak for its value. Throughout the Cold War, the binding commitments and interdependence helped balance unilateral impulses with long term interests, and thus, preserve stability in the system. Furthermore, as Chapter III of this thesis indicates, the replacement of the "war-fighting" strategies with a focus on stability and political transformation, achieved through cooperative policies, played a great role in bringing about the end of the Cold War. As predicted by George Kennan, it was the cohesiveness of the Trans-Atlantic alliance, maintained through common values and a focus on cooperative policies that produced a political transformation in the Soviet Union short of war. President Clinton furthered the logic of

²⁶¹ Americans & the World, Public opinion on International Affairs, (http://www.americans-world.org/digest/global_issues/un/un4.cfm, consulted on 11 June 2004)

multilateral security and economic institutions by establishing the Partnership for Peace program and pursuing multilateral resolution of threats to international stability and U.S. security.

Moreover, aside from the intended benefits, the achievement of the binding and interdependent relations envisaged more than a half of century ago by the Western democracies resulted also in the rise of global threats such as terrorism and hostile non-state actors. The increased globalization and interdependence among states presents challenges today that are inherently transnational and cannot be met unilaterally as they are by definition multilateral problems. Consequently, multilateral cooperation is mandatory for the successful tackling of today's transnational threats.

As Joseph S. Nye Jr. noted, even states as militarily powerful as the United States are unable to secure their interests unilaterally in the long term:

... in this global information age, number one ain't gonna be what it used to be. To succeed in such a world, America must not only maintain its hard power but understand its soft power and how to combine the two in the pursuit of national and global interests.²⁶²

Hence, despite the increased prominence of the hard-line approach in American foreign and security policy, the likelihood of a lasting influence of the Bush doctrine of preemption is unrealistic. The discrepancies between the initial American claim with regards to Iraq's possession of WMD and the post-conflict findings further discredited the Bush doctrine.

In sum, based on the analysis conducted, this thesis concludes that the constraints on the Bush doctrine's endurance are embedded particularly in its inconsistency with the American strategic culture in the modern history. Throughout the last half of century, the United States projected the national values abroad, shaping the system of interaction in the international relations arena based on specificities of the traditional American strategic culture, rooted in the multilateral creed. The end result is that the international system comprises built-in constraints that raise the cost of isolationist and unilateralist impulses to unbearable levels in the long term.

²⁶² Joseph S. Nye Jr., *The Paradox of American Power*, p. 171.

This conclusion has been confirmed by the U.S. experience of the difficulty of regime change in Iraq. This might be the ingredient that will help bring about a greater awareness of the Bush doctrine's flaws. Furthermore, the constraints on a continuous hard-line approach are illustrated by evolutions of the Bush administration's approach in the aftermath of the 2003 U.S.-led intervention in Iraq. The U.S. policy toward North Korea and Iran brought into focus the necessity of alternative strategies as deterrence and reassurance. Hence, further efforts to reach a proper balance between non-violent coercive measures and the use of force should offer a constructive basis for further adjustments.²⁶³

Altogether, the debate over the Bush doctrine of preemption and its application in Iraq indisputably placed the United States and its traditional allies in conflict. However, despite the current perception of the collapse of traditional alliances, historical examples illustrate that most attempts to revolutionize the international system have been characterized by a perception of crisis. The Bush administration's desire to amend the current mechanisms to cope with the security environment has been shared by most U.S. allies, and steps have been taken in this direction.²⁶⁴ Furthermore, UN Secretary General Kofi A. Annan's decision to redefine legitimate circumstances of UN-sanctioned military intervention to include "protection against international terrorism and [the] halt [of] the spread of weapons of mass destruction,"²⁶⁵ reveals prospects for propitious future cooperation. Overall, if proper lessons are learned from this experience, the revitalization of the international institutions as necessary participants in the management of current security threats could be achieved on one hand, while on the other American hard-liners would be reminded of the benefits of such institutionalized multilateral cooperation.²⁶⁶

Although the dispute over Iraq has been considered as jeopardizing the UN and critically undermining the international laws governing the use of force, the UN remains the single international body that commands a high degree of international legitimacy,

²⁶³ Robert S Litwak, *Non-proliferation and the Dilemmas of Regime Change*, p. 19.

²⁶⁴ For details see Chapter II of this thesis.

²⁶⁵ Annan Kofi, *Defining a New Role for the United Nations*, *International Herald Tribune*, 4 December 2003.

²⁶⁶ James J. Wirtz and James Russell, U.S. Policy on Preventive War and Preemption, *The Nonproliferation Review*, Spring 2003, p. 122.

despite its deficiencies.²⁶⁷ The fact that the United States relied its pre-war justifications for its military intervention on previous UNSC resolutions amounts to clear recognition that, while not perfect, the UN is the best instrument for pursuing international order, which still remains an central interest in the twenty-first century.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁷ Adam Roberts, “Law and the Use of Force After Iraq,” p. 52.

²⁶⁸ Adam Roberts, “Law and the Use of Force After Iraq,” p. 53; and Richard K. Betts, “Striking First: A History of Thankfully Lost Opportunities,” p. 1.

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